DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 411 188 SO 027 671

AUTHOR Fuhr, Ernest
TITLE Promoting Tolerance through Multicultural Education.
PUB DATE 1996-04-30
NOTE 100p.; M.A. Field Project, Saint Xavier University and IRI/Skylight.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses (040)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Action Research; Cross Cultural Studies; Cross Cultural Training; *Cultural Activities; *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Pluralism; Culture Contact; Evaluation Methods; Grade 8; *Intergroup Relations; Junior High Schools; *Multicultural Education; Participatory Research; Secondary Education; *Social Action
IDENTIFIERS Rockford School District 205 IL

ABSTRACT

This paper describes a program designed to increase student awareness and appreciation of their own culture and the cultures of others. The study was conducted in a northern Illinois junior high among 30 eighth grade language arts students. Data were gathered through teacher observation, teacher-student interviews, student surveys and student attitudinal tests. The problems of discrimination, segregation, and institutional racism were well documented by a lawsuit against the targeted school district. The multicultural intervention addressed these issues by attempting to change student attitudes toward fellow classmates and their cultures. Lack of cultural diversity in the school curriculum and perceived societal silence on issues of race contributed to students' lack of appreciation of culture. A review of the professional literature and a review of each problem setting resulted in the selection of a solution strategy. Students were exposed to a model for change which consisted of awareness, understanding, acceptance and tolerance of diversity. Post intervention data indicated only minor changes in student awareness and appreciation of their own culture and the cultures of others. Appendices offer examples of classroom activities used to assess student awareness. (EH)

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ED 411 188

PROMOTING TOLERANCE THROUGH MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by

Ernest Fuhr

Submitted in fullfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master's of Arts in Teaching and Leadership

St. Xavier University & IRI/Skylight

Field Based Master's Program

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Action Research Project
Site: Rockford, Illinois
Submitted: April 30, 1996

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Abstract

Author: Ernie Fuhr Site: Rockford 5

Date: April 30, 1996

Title: Strides in Multicultural Awareness

This report describes a program to increase student awareness and appreciation of their own culture and the cultures of others. The targeted population consisted of junior high eighth grade language arts students, located in Northern Illinois. The problems of discrimination, segregation, and institutional racism were well documented by a lawsuit against the targeted school district. The multicultural intervention addressed these issues by attempting to change student attitudes toward fellow classmates and cultures with whom they interact.

Failure of the curriculum to address cultural diversity and societal silence on issues of race contributed to students' lack of appreciation of culture.

A review of solution strategies suggested in the professional literature and a review of each problem setting resulted in the selection of an intervention. Students were exposed to a model for change which consisted of awareness, understanding, acceptance and tolerance of diversity.

Post intervention data indicated only minor changes in student awareness and appreciation of their own culture and the cultures of others.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Abstract..... i

Chapter

1 Problem Statement and Context..... 1

General Statement of Problem..... 1

Immediate Problem Context..... 1

The Surrounding Community..... 3

Regional and National Context of Problem 5

2 Problem Evidence and Probable Cause..... 11

Problem Evidence..... 11

Probable Causes..... 23

3 The Solution Strategy..... 34

Review of the Literature..... 34

Project Outcome and Solution Components.....48

Action Plan for the Intervention..... 49

Methods of Assessment..... 50

4 Project Results.....53

Historical Description of Intervention..... 53

Presentation and Analysis of Results.....57

Conclusions and Recommendations..... 73

References Cited..... 76

Appendices.....

Appendix A -Attitudinal Survey 80

Appendix B -Generalizations 81

Appendix C -Black Poetry Essay.....82

Appendix D -Conrack Assignment.....83

Appendix E -LaBamba Assignment.....84

Appendix F -Little Big Man Assignment.....85

Appendix G -Brother Future Assignment.....86

Appendix H -The Form.....87

Appendix I -Literature Circles.....88

Appendix J -Art Assessment.....89

Appendix K -Staff criticisms of Black History Assembly and rebuttal.....90-3

Chapter 1

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND DESCRIPTION OF CONTEXT

Statement of Problem

The targeted secondary classes at School A demonstrate a lack of appreciation for different cultures as evidenced by teacher observation, teacher-student interviews, student surveys and student attitudinal tests.

Immediate Problem Context

The targeted middle school, located in Rockford, Illinois, currently enrolls 1014 seventh and eighth grade students. The average class size is 32.7 students. Ninety-eight percent of the students ride busses to school each day. Fifty-eight of the students are in self-contained special education classes, and the remainder of the student body participate in heterogenous core teams, following the recommendations of the School District Middle School Concept Committee.

The racial-ethnic breakdown is as follows: 68.3 percent Caucasian, 20.5 percent African-American, 8.3 percent Hispanic, 2.4 percent Asian, 0.2 percent Native American. One percent of the students are eligible for bilingual education. These statistics reveal a slightly higher percentage of Caucasian students than the percentage reported for Rockford School District as a whole, at 66.2 percent. More than 33.7 percent of the students at this middle school come from families that are considered low-income and are eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunches.

This is lower than the average for the entire district, at 22.4 percent. The chronic truancy rate of 15.9 percent far exceeds the district average of 8.3 percent, and the Illinois average of 2.4 percent. Of the total enrollment, 19.1 percent enroll in, or withdraw from the school throughout the school year.

The administrative staff consists of a building principal and two assistant principals. The certified support staff includes four guidance counselors, a math curriculum developer, an English curriculum developer, a school nurse, a part-time social worker, a part-time psychologist, and a librarian. Three clerical employees, twelve food service personnel, and aides comprise the non-certified staff.

The teaching staff of 61 includes seven special education teachers. The staff is predominantly Caucasian, with only three being of African-American descent, one of Hispanic descent, and one Asian. The average number of years of teaching experience

is 14.6. Sixty-five percent of the staff hold master's degrees.

The middle school sits on 29.79 acres and was constructed in 1954. It is a modern, two-story structure, including special wings for physical education and electives. The elective wing includes a $114,000 technology center, financially supported by local businesses; a computer room; an auditorium; a theater; and a swimming pool.

The Surrounding Community

This school district serves a community of 148,000 people located 75 miles from a major metropolitan area. The city in which the school is located covers a 50 square mile area within the 803 square mile metro area of its two counties. This Midwestern city is made up of large German, Italian, and Swedish ethnic groups. The city's mayor is an African-American; a Democrat, he is regarded "moderate" and was easily re-elected in 1993. In 1994, the city drew much unwelcome publicity when the Ku Klux Klan (from outside the community) held a rally at the courthouse downtown. Alternative activities to encourage tolerance were held that afternoon.

This city is known for its affordable housing, park district, and an economy based on manufacturing. There are ten major manufacturing companies that employ over 1,000 employees. According to the 1990 Census Report, the work force is 30 percent manufacturing, 26 percent service ralated, 17 percent retail, and the remaining 27 percent is comprised of government,

wholesale, and other.

Data on adults twenty-five years of age and over showed that 74.8 percent had completed high school or higher education, and 18.17 percent had earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The census figures also indicate that 77.9 percent of the population was White, 14.1 percent was Black, four percent was Hispanic, one and one-half percent was Native American and two percent was comprised of other races.

Other facts about the district include 26,915 students enrolled in a total of forty-eight schools that include 37 elementary schools, four middle schools, four senior high schools, two special education facilities, two early education centers, and one high school alternative/adult education program.

In terms of higher education, the community has a four-year private college, a public junior college, a university extension college of medicine, engineering studies, nurses' training, and a business college. A second state university is presently being constructed on a site in this community. The service area for the new university includes all three of the targeted schools.

The school district has had a history of financial difficulties. In 1978, the arts, sports, and extra curricular activities were eliminated in the schools because of the failure of a tax referendum, which would have supported these programs. Insufficient revenue was a continuous threat to this school district.

During May of 1989, a lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court against the school district. The lawsuit charged the district with long-time discrimination against minority students. The school distict was found guilty of institutionalized racism. To remedy this situation, an interim agreement is being implemented. All high schools and middle schools were integrated for the 1992-1993 school year. A new superintendent came to this school district in January of 1994. The community has also become more involved in shaping the educational goals of the district. A parent center is in operation, and an ad hoc committee was led by a group of eight local businessmen, who each brought various areas of expertise to the committee.

Regional and National Context of the Problem

Support for the multicultural curricula comes on the heels of segregation lawsuits that have been the focus of much attention nationally and locally. A wide range of issues have made multicultural education a necessary component of a culturally diverse nation. Busing, for example, is supposed to remedy segregation and inequality in per pupil expenditure. Yet busing and racial mixture of students does not necessarily create tolerance of other students' race, religion, or national origin. Despite racial segregation, the United States is still the boldest experiment in cultural diversity in the history of the world.

In 1993, a federal court found the school district guilty of discrimination against minority students.

"(The school district) discriminated against its minority students through the use of its ability

grouping and tracking practices. The RSD both created this segregation by using invalid testing procedures and employing arcane assumptions and maintained such segregation by locking minority students into lower track classes with little or no hope moving upward...the RSD tracking practices produced racially identifiable classes and courses. Further, the court finds that the RSD was aware of its practices and results" (Roszkowski, 1993).

Since then, the efforts to desegregate schools have been superficial. According to a recent report issued by consultants Michael Alves, Robert Dentler, and Charles Willie, busing went only one-way. "...No white students from grade seven through twelve attending nonspecialty programs today travel from east of the Rock River to schools on the west side," they said (Nikolai 1995)[B].

The same report found other remnants of discrimination as well. Gifted classes still contained too few minorities. Since these programs really functioned as schools within a school, the report felt that they didn't desegregate a building. The number of white students at magnet schools left even greater proportions of Black children at their neighborhood schools, courses were reduced and limited to certain buildings, and "households residing west of the Rock River were still being isolated racially and ethnically" (Nikolai, 1995)[C].

Given the latter of the these findings, it is safe

to assume that the problem of racial division extends beyond the scope of the schools. In the opinion of the school's lawyer, Bill Quinlan, "It's not enough to say, close the achievement gap. You have to differentiate what portion of the gap is attributable to causes other than the schools" (Nikolai 1995)[C].

However, through extensive media coverage and tax bills, it is the school's dilemma which is most visible to the public. The ongoing financial burden of desegregation was exascerbated in the spring of 1995. To meet the ongoing demands of remedying discrimination, rather than using in-house personnel, the district chose instead to hire a number of outside consultants at a cost of $1.1 million in one year (Nikolai 1995)[B]. This strategy did much to further alienate teachers and taxpayers, who saw it as irrational, wasteful, and even corrupt. "What we've got going is a network of "you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours," said Molly Phalen, president of the teacher's union (Nikolai, 1995)[B].

This move also affected any progress that may have been made as far as the multicultural agenda. One of the major consultants involved, Harriet Doss Willis, of California, received $461,000 from the district over three years for her recommendations on multicultural curriculum and teacher training (Nikolai 1995)[B]. In the 1993 school discrimination trial, Ms. Willis testified that some teachers did not treat Black and Hispanic children fairly.

Since then, through both her statements and encounters with teachers, Willis "has ticked off people to the point where she is no longer effective", according to Phalen (Nikolai, 1995)[B].

In addition to the consultant strategy, the original problem of discrimination was compounded by the district's poor communications. A case in point was the series of meetings to disseminate information on "controlled choice", the latest proposal to desegregate buildings, based on the Alves report mentioned previously. After an initially good campaign, the district bungled slated meetings by giving incorrect locations or else setting them up too hastily. At one crucial meeting, only three out of 2,000 invited staff showed up (Nikolai, 1995)[A]. "We dropped the ball," admitted Jim Jennings, the district's communication director (Nikolai, 1995)[A].

Perhaps the racial polarization and low public morale is best illustrated in a column by Mr. Richard Wedel, a retired educator:

> Forced attendance at 'multiculturalism' sessions insult competent and effective teachers who are on the firing line and who need support and encouragement, not lectures...Brotherhood cannot be bought. Desegregation is not the work of consultants...This city needs healing. It cannot be healed by more bruising, more central administrators, more out of town masters. We need to be brought together, common

citizens in a common purpose, not adversaries fighting still an old battle that is over (Wedel, 1995, p.6). Change, the saying goes, takes place from the bottom up. Obviously, if there is to be any effort to heal racial divisions and bring people together, or even to adjust the curriculum to that end, then it would only take place in the individual classroom.

Nationally, the problem of racial division may not be as chaotic as it is in the target community, but it is existent. Prior to Brown v. Board of Education, segregation was legal, even though separate schools were, as the Supreme Court ruled in Brown, "inherently unequal" (Kendall 1983). Black people then were subordinated based on color, and the schools reinforced this disparity.

Since the Brown decision in 1954, institutionalized racism has been driven underground. Blatant behavior is replaced by subtler underlying attitudes. These attitudes, while not necessarily malicious, do send the wrong message. For example, a teacher can disseminate information on racial groups, but if that teacher believes that a child has limited ability based on their race, then that is a form of racism. This teacher would undoubtedly deny being racist, and would probably become quite indignant and angry if labelled accordingly. It may be subconscious and it may be a matter of degree, but it still exists. Thus, we have an educational system in this nation that has demanded changing racist behavior, yet did not provide the support

for examining and changing attitudes (Kendall 1983).

It was the desegregation movement of the 60's that generated support and momentum for multicultural education in America (Kendall 1983). If desegregation is not an end, but rather a means to an end, it becomes necessary for something in the curriculum, K-12, to reinforce it and foster tolerance. Without a multicultural adaptation to the curriculum, a vacuum would exist; kids, and eventually the adults they became, would be expected to assimilate on their own. This is a precarious situation, and really fails to break the cycle of racist thinking that exists in our society.

Chapter 2

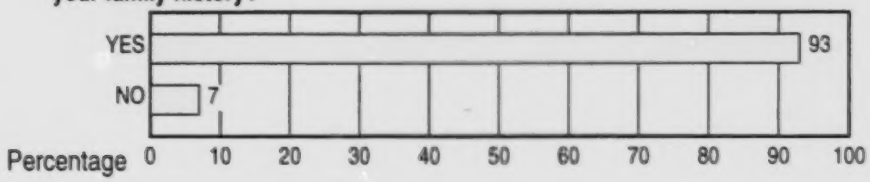
PROBLEM EVIDENCE AND PROBABLE CAUSE

Problem Evidence

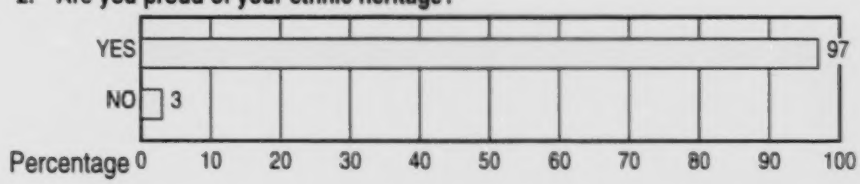
In order to document the extent of student tolerance and the appreciation of other cultures, a student pre-test was given, which measured attitude and basic knowledge of other cultures. In addition to this pre-test, students were surveyed on several generalizations, as to whether they agreed or disagreed with them. To measure openness, students were to write a journal entry on the topic, "Is it important to study other cultures? Why or why not?"

While all 30 students in the class took the survey on stereotypes, only 29 took the attitudinal pre-test, due to one absence. The results of the pre-test are summarized in the following figures.

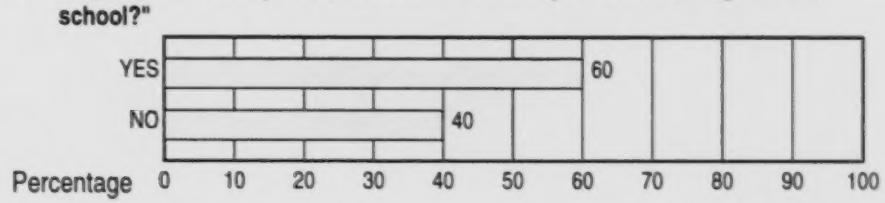
1. "Do you think that it is important to talk to your parents and grandparents about your family history?"



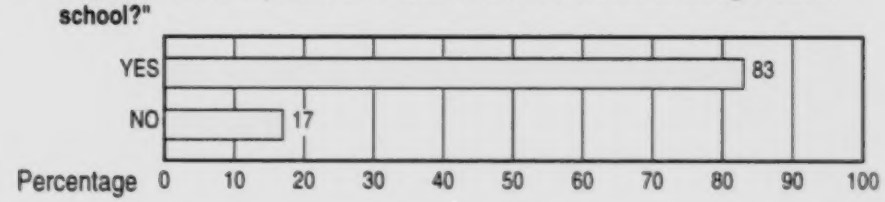
2. "Are you proud of your ethnic heritage?"



3. "Do you think it is important to learn more about your ethnic background in school?"



4. "Do you think it is important to learn more about other ethnic backgrounds in school?"



5. "By studying other cultures, do you feel that you will become more tolerant of other ethnic groups?"

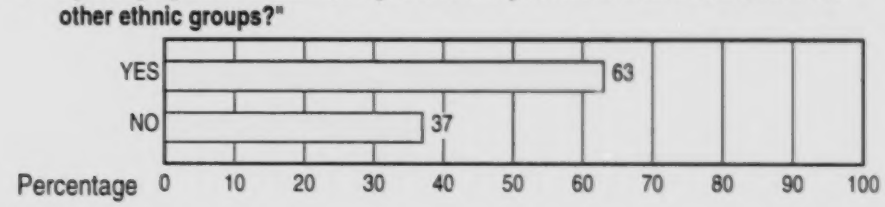


Figure 1

STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNICITY

August 28, 1995

To indicate a favorable attitude towards learning about other cultures, the ideal answers would all be "yes" to the first five questions. These five questions all received the highest majority of "yes" responses, particularly in the first two items, which pertain to family heritage. The lowest response had to do with learning about one's own culture, with just over half the students in agreement. It should be noted that on the "knowledge" survey, the class average was seventy-five percent. This is not very encouraging, as the questions were basic. Only eighty-two percent of the students could correctly identify Martin Luther King or Harriett Tubman. The lowest scoring questions, which undoubtedly brought the average down, had to do with Oriental and Native-American culture. A possible reason for this is that students are not regularly exposed to these cultures in an everyday setting.

Figure two examines other variables in the student's personal experience, and compares Black students' response to the White students' response. On several questions, the Black students did not respond. It is ironic that while the majority of both groups have cross-cultural friendships, they tend not to be interested in the art or festivities of other cultures. Blacks appear more studious than Whites, with over half getting their input from books and classroom settings; wheareas Whites base their attitudes on those of their friends and from what they see on televison. Nearly half of both groups admit to occasionally feeling hostilty

towards a different ethnic group. This is significant in that, of all the questions, this one is probably the most honest indicator of intolerance.

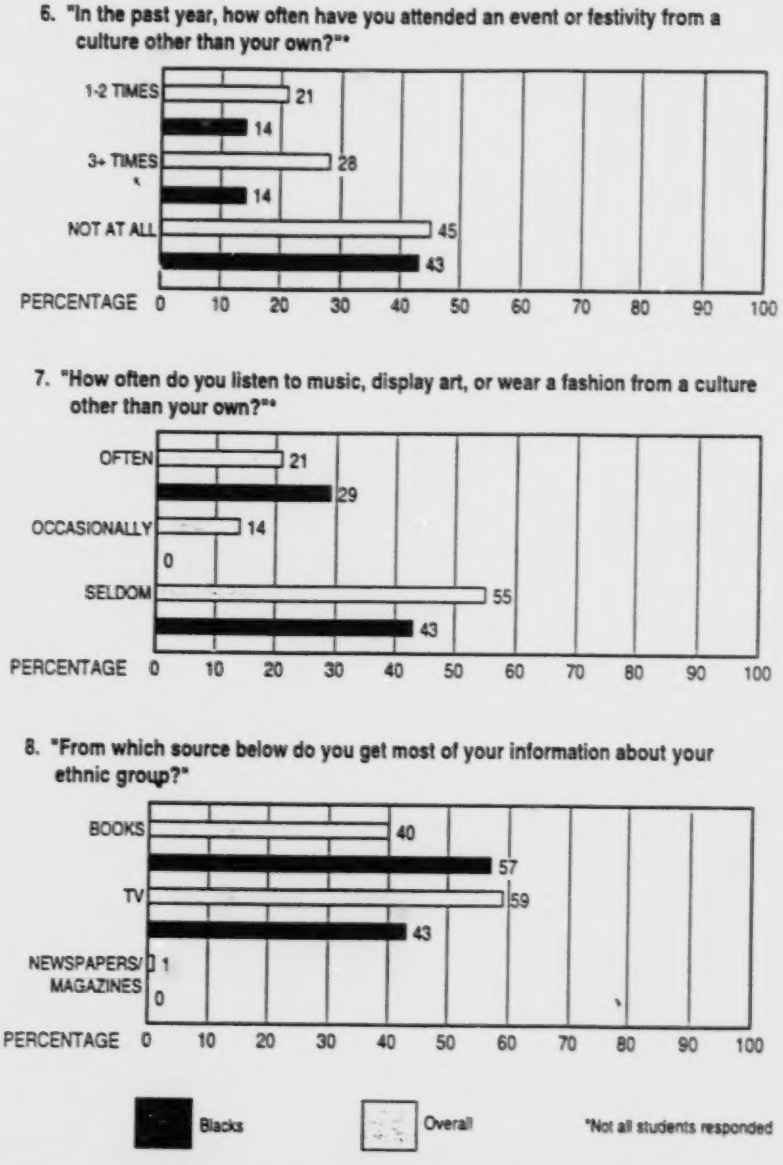
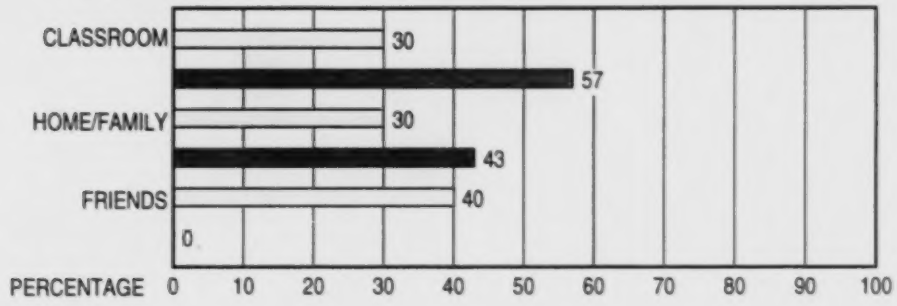
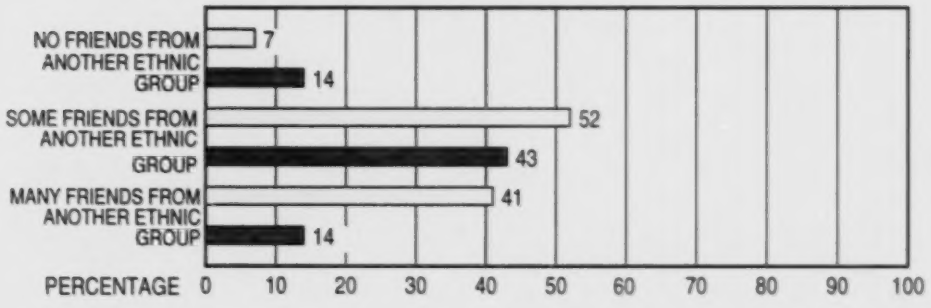


Figure 2
STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNICITY
August 28, 1995

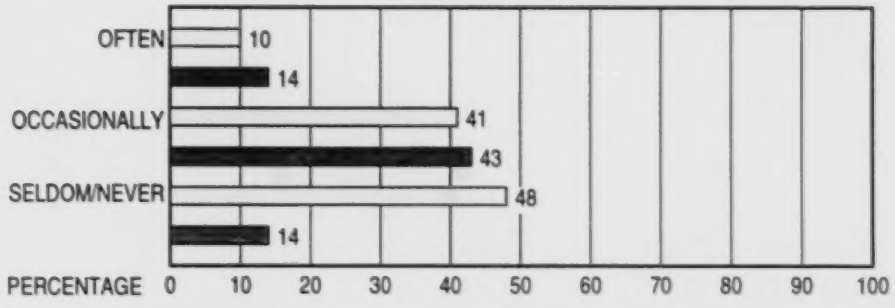
9. "In your opinion, where do you get your attitudes toward other ethnic groups?"



10. "Which of the following best describes you?"*



11. "Do you feel anger or hostility towards a different ethnic group?"*

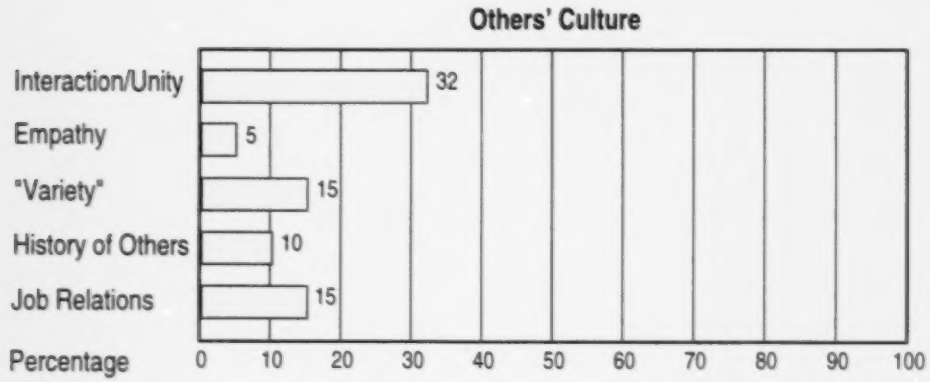


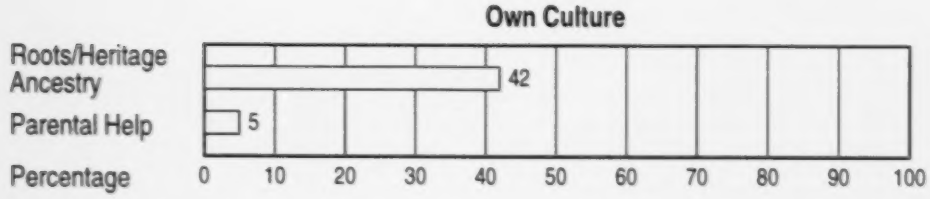
Blacks Overall *Not all students responded

Figure 2
STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNICITY
August 28, 1995
Cont.

Figure three supports table one's data that the majority of students feel that it is more important to learn about cultures other than their own. Selfishness is absent, as less than half of the journal entries focused exclusively on learning about other's culture. When you add this percentage to the percentage of students who mentioned "both", you arrive at exactly the same percentage who responded "yes" to "is it important to learn more about other ethnic backgrounds in school?" The fact that the two responses are exactly the same does suggest some consistency in the student's attitudes. Nearly half of the students expressed interest in their own family heritage; so, this again is the dominant theme. It is safe to assume that the students are open to learning about culture, since not one journal entry expressed opposition to it.

Topic: "Should we study other cultures? Why or why not?"





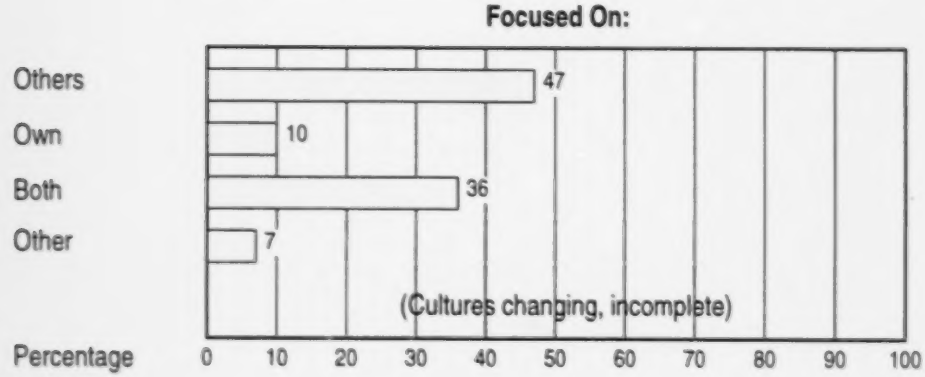
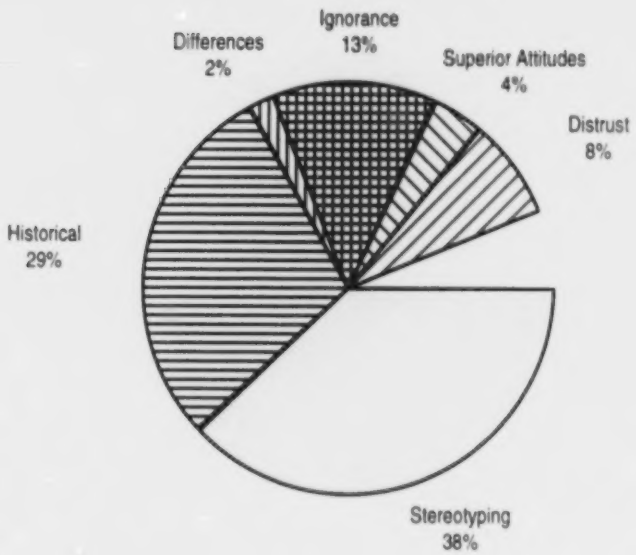


Figure 3
DOMINANT THEMES IN STUDENT JOURNALS
August 29, 1995

As far as causation is concerned, students were given the topic "What causes racism?" and were expected to write a journal on this topic. Six students were absent on this day. Only twenty-four journals were examined, the results of which are displayed in Figure 4. Over one-third of the students felt that stereotyping was to blame, and just less than one-third felt that the primary causes were rooted in historical oppression of minorities, mainly slavery. These are clearly the top two reasons cited, distantly followed by other causes: ignorance, distrust, differences, and superior attitude. Stereotyping was mentioned more often than these causes combined. While all opinions are certainly valid, the researcher wondered how many of these "causes" could also be classified as "symptoms".

There is much talk about the absence of heroes in our society and the absence of family values. On another day, students were asked to journal on the topic of "Who is your hero? Why?" The number who made the statement "I don't have any heroes", while enough to be unfortunate, was surprisingly small. Larger than expected was the number of journal entries that mentioned family members, half of them. This shows that the family can play a positive role, when it comes to forming character and tolerance. Conversely, it can play a negative role. On the first day's discussion of diversity, a Black girl gave a demonstration on race relations that she claimed her mother had taught her. Promising to show how the government was racist",

Topic: "What causes racism?"



Topic: "Who are your heroes?"

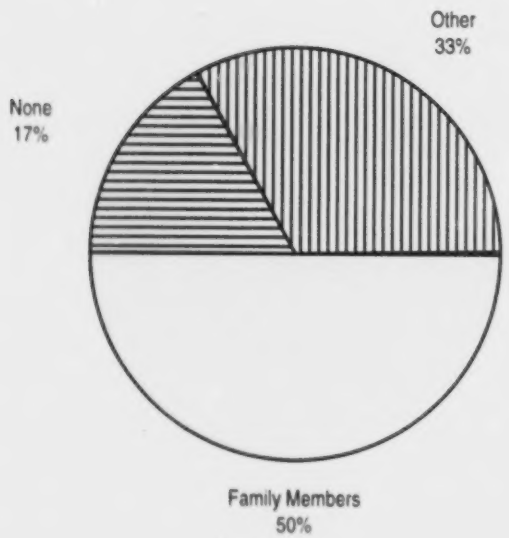


Figure 4
DOMINANT THEMES IN STUDENT JOURNALS
September 29, 1995

she gathered four coins, a quarter, a nickel, a dime, and a penny. She then isolated the penny and said "This (Lincoln) was the president who freed the slaves and liked Black people, so they set him apart. He is the only one on a brown coin...silver is worth more as it gets older and copper ain't (sic) worth nuthin'". Another experience that speaks to a possible lack of role models occurred when last year's beating/mugging of civil rights hero Rosa Parks was mentioned. The researcher observed that most students knew who she was, but two Black students expressed that they didn't feel that there was anything especially shameful or ironic about it.

The issue of stereotyping, or "generalizing" was discussed on the first week of class. All thirty students then completed a survey in which they would either agree or disagree with stereotypes commonly associated with ethnic groups. As generalizations are often negative and offensive, this was not something the researcher took lightly. It had to be emphasized that generalizations may have negative outcomes. No students expressed being offended by the survey, but three students were reluctant to put their name on it, and two students expressed that they were uncomfortable taking it. "It's like you're telling us to be racist," said one student. The researcher redirected the class, explaining that these were real stereotypes. The stereotypes were negative, and the intent was to examine them so that we could discuss them. The students were

encouraged to be honest and reassured that their papers would be kept confidential. The results are recorded in Table 5.

Table 5

STEREOTYPES IN STUDENT THINKING

August 29, 1995

	Agree	Disagree
WHITE PEOPLE		
Snobs	37% (83%)	63% (17%)
Greedy	30% (50%)	63% (50%)
Prejudicial	37% (100%)	50% (0%)
BLACK PEOPLE		
Lazy	30% (33%)	63% (67%)
On Welfare	30% (67%)	63% (33%)
In Gangs	53% (67%)	37% (33%)
NATIVE AMERICANS		
Drunks	17% (50%)	77% (50%)
Live on Reservations	10% (17%)	83% (83%)
Spiritual	67% (83%)	23% (17%)
HISPANICS		
Don't Speak English	30% (17%)	67% (83%)
Good Physical Laborers	43% (50%)	47% (50%)
Prefer Hot, Spicy Food	63% (67%)	27% (33%)
ASIAN AMERICANS		
Shy	43% (83%)	43% (17%)
Smart	53% (83%)	33% (17%)
Talk Funny	27% (67%)	63% (33%)

Note: Black students' response in parentheses.

There probably is no definable, acceptable number with regard to believing stereotypes. It is significant that just over half of those surveyed believed that Blacks are in gangs. Close to one-third of the students believed in several of the most negative stereotypes. It is not a majority, but it is enough to be concerned about. In addition, all of the Blacks felt that Whites were prejudiced. Half considered Whites greedy and three-quarters considered them conceited. It is noteworthy that the majority of Blacks had low opinions of their own ethnicity, believing that they are in gangs and on welfare. This would support the theories that Blacks do have low self-esteem and resent White people's social position.

With regard to other ethnic groups, the majority of students felt that Hispanics love spicy food, and that Orientals are smart. Close to half of the students believed that Orientals are shy and Hispanics are good physical laborers. A clear majority of students denied that Native Americans are drunks and live on reservations, yet nearly three-quarters view Native Americans as "spiritual". A possible explantion is that the students really have no direct dealings with this population. If indeed the majority of students form their impressions from televison, Native Americans are not normally filmed as being drunk or living in the squalor of reservations. Rather, viewers see the "mythical" Indian, looking and living exotically. This view does portray a spiritual side.

Probable Causes

According to the targeted school's assistant principal, there are few race-related behavior referrals that cross his desk. He said that when Blacks and Whites do fight, race is not a factor. He admits that this is surprising given the racial makeup up at the school, and the socio-economic background many of our students come from. He added that racist behavior that does exist is in the form of taunting, or a student walking down the hall and poking another student with a pencil. (Bob Dougherty, personal communication, September 26, 1995). It is important not to minimize this. These types of attacks and slurs perpetuate racial tension, and pervade educational institutions, even more severely at the collegiate level (Billings, 1992).

On the surface, it appears that students have been conditioned to be tolerant. As stated previously, journals indicate a high degree of openness and receptivity, but it was when results from the stereotype survey were examined that the researcher noticed problems in the students' thinking. The latter questions on the attitudinal survey (Table 2) showed some contradictions, i.e. good will and openness vs. the tendency to isolate oneself. Given this, it becomes necessary to look "below the surface", where racism exists at a subconscious level.

The researcher spoke with the school's parent liason, a Black man who is founder and sponsor of the Black student group, "White Rhinocerous Club". He agrees that any lack of tolerance is not malicious, but rather a combination of subtler things: Whites' ignorance of "non-verbals" and the low self-esteem of African-Americans.

According to the parent liason, Blacks tend to be more conscious of body language and facial expressions, these "non-verbals" communicate people's attitudes and emotions. In terms of race relations, he feels they can be misinterpreted by Whites. One example is of no eye contact being wrongly equated with a lack of respect. "To this day I have never seen my father nor grandfather make eye contact with a White man," he said.

The low self-esteem among Blacks at our school may be a reason for lack of tolerance. As discussed previously (Table 5), Blacks tend to have low opinions of themselves. This is due to the negative stereotyping of Blacks over time, and a lack of role models. Eventually, the low self-esteem translates into intolerance as it manifests in the form of contempt and envy for other cultures, mainly Whites. "I've actually had (Black) kids say to me 'I want to be white'. They perceive Whites as having all the money and power." (Darryl Hobson, personal communication, September 29, 1995).

On a national level, the literature would indicate that low self-esteem is a very valid cause for intolerance

Keyes (1995) offers a unique explanation why in his recent book Masters of the Dream. A former college president and state department official, Dr. Keyes is so far the only major Black presidential candidate. In his view, freedom is the "American dream" and since historically Blacks valued freedom and struggle and suffered in pursuit of it, they are the "masters of the dream". Keyes sees Blacks as historically maintaining their dignity and self-esteem, even when they were in bondage and suffered terrible atrocities and institutionalized racism. They remained motivated, and drew on inner strength, which he believes mirrored religious convictions. As a people, he notes that Blacks valued faith, family, and the pursuit of education to better their condition, especially when they were denied these things. It was a recent onslaught of welfare programs and government involvement that ruined the moral fiber of Black Americans by damaging their sense of self-worth, "encouraging idleness, disintegrating families," and for being unable to "shape character" (Keyes, 1995, p.161).

> Unless they consciously guard against it, the pursuit of the liberal agenda can lead Black Americans to act without regard for their own institutions. We become so preoccupied with the negative conditions of that identity (racism, discrimination, poverty) that we lose sight of its positive moral content. In the effort to throw off the stigma of segregation,

> we give up the pursuit or maintenence of values that reflect the distinctive moral identity forged by the black-American experience (Keyes, 1995, p.159).

Keyes sees Afrocentric education as a good sign only in that it means the Black community sees a need to rediscover their moral heritage. Yet, he views it as an intellectual and artistic pursuit. "Action is the essence of moral life...it is not enough to recall the facts of our past experiences. We must also remember our present actions and the values they represent" (Keyes, 1995, p.162).

Immoral behavior, by any racial group, can be responsible for creating stereotypes. Crime statistics offer some insight, as Blacks do commit a disproportionate share of violent crime (Illinois State Police, 1993). When there is a greater amount than normal, these criminal acts will portray a "bad" image. Immoral behavior is also more pertinent to Blacks because it may be responsible for generating the low self esteem that this group suffers from. As the majority of Black crime is actually "Black on Black", it is usually not perceived as newsworthy by the media, and police investigations are not as serious as they would be had the victim been White (Werner, 1995). It is easy to see how this would hurt a community's morale and make them feel discriminated against and therefore angry. Black crime, in whatever form, is self-defeating.

Columnist Arthur Hu concurs that a lack of values among Blacks generates jealousy and racial conflict. In

Los Angeles, there is racial tension between Blacks and Koreans. During the L.A. riots, some 1600 Korean stores were burned or ransacked. Korean merchants have been killed by thieves in high proportions, and over 7,000 Koreans have returned to their homeland (MacFahrquhar, 1992). Hu writes:

> "It's not as if Korean-Americans are far more economically powerful than black Americans. The difference is that Koreans have the highest employed of any ethnic group, and their willingness to work very hard for very little money gives them a competitive advantage in inner city neighborhoods where supermarkets fear to tread. Blacks have also ceded the worst entry-level jobs to immigrants.
>
> Thus, Latinos and immigrants toil at subminimum wages, living in tiny cubicles and shacks in order to send money to their families in the old country, while many Black teens turn up their noses at jobs at McDonald's for double the minimum wage...Koreans don't get special loans; they just work three jobs, save, sacrifice, and borrow from loan pools built by family and friends" (Hu, 1992).

While the difference in work ethic is significant, the stronger-than-normal family ties and clannishness of the Koreans has also been cited as one reason for the Blacks' intolerance. In addition, non-verbals and other subtleties also play a role. Blacks interpret the Koreans'

cultural signals and fractured English as rudeness (MacFahrquhar, 1992).

Contrary to the possible influence of family over students, (or the lone student who wrote that we should study culture so that his parents could help with homework), there is no shortage of literature to suggest that the role of the family has diminished. Without this sense of heritage and belonging, young people are fertile ground for social dysfunction, including lack of self-awareness and intolerance of those who do have this constant in their lives. Gatto (1992) believes that it is the schools themselves which cause this generation gap, by keeping students "locked away" from the general population; thereby preventing any sense of community, and one's role in it. He feels that schools maintain a social "caste" system and that genuine communities, where young and old are better able to interract, have been replaced by "networks". According to Gatto, these networks breed loneliness, and since the student has no sense of commonality, a real sense of values is lost. In the author's view, this crisis deepens in the depersonalized urban areas. Any remedies, whether they be in the curriculum or in desegregation lawsuits, are artificial approaches (Gatto, 1992). Gatto writes:

> ...networks, even good ones, drain the vitality from communities and families. They provide mechanical ("by the numbers") solutions to human problems, when

> a slow, organic process of self-awareness, self -discovery, and cooperation is required if any solution is to stick (Gatto, 1992, p.52).

According to a recent study, cultural awareness among the Hispanic population tends to decline the longer they are in this country. The study showed that the decline was significant between the first and second generations of the studied population, and that this decline continued through the 4th generation (Marcell, 1995).

This same research classifies Hispanics into categories. It was the first two categories who were the most successful in school because they were fresher arrivals than the other two categories, the Cholos and Chicanos. The study found that the Chicanos were alienated from school and "at risk". This group, which is native born, accounts for the majority of Hispanic students in America.

The other group, the Cholos, represents the "low riders" or rebellious students. The study characterized the Cholos as "students who lost their Mexican roots" and found them most likely to be gang members.

Other literature suggests that along with the conservative trend in this country, there is a "White backlash". Whites, who often fall prey to demagogues, are resisting the demands of minorities and charge them with "reverse discrimination" (Herbert, 1995). The affirmative action debate in this country is at the center of this conflict, and cannot be isolated as an "adult"

issue since parental influence is crucial in promoting tolerance among young people (Billings, 1992). It is to be noted here that 95 percent of the top management jobs are still held by white men, and while there are problems with unfairness, literature suggests that the problems are correctable, and the negative impact of affirmative action has been exaggerated (Herbert, 1995).

According to the writings of Herbert (1995) and Billings (1992), in times of economic recession or corporate downsizing, displaced white collar workers look for scapegoats. This intolerance has larger ramifications for our society, now in the midst of a climate that observers consider "mean".

> The United States is going through a period in which the politics of meanness is on the ascent. In many circles, it's unfashionable to be compassionate. Putting down others is the dominant mode of political expression, preferably with a vicious remark accompanied by cruel laughter (Herbert, 1992, p.25).

"Hatred is hip", writes Billings, in an article by the same title. She quotes Michael Meyers of the New York Civil Rights Coalition as saying, "It's become fashionable to hate..it's become pedestrian, commonplace, and acceptable" (Billings, 1992, p. 37).

In criticizing the effects of compulsory education, Gatto writes,

> The children I teach are cruel to each other; they lack compassion for misfortune; they laugh at weakness; they have contempt for people whose need for help shows too plainly (Gatto, 1988, p.31).

There are two products of intolerance that hamper any progress in fighting intolerance; the first casualty being the textbook market. Literature suggests that censorship is on the rise, only now the pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. Ornstein (1992) writes that as recently as the 1950's, textbooks "barely included" or excluded poor people, immigrants, minorities, women, and even Democratic presidents. Cultures were often depicted as exotic or stereotypical. Now, with political correctness and multicultural curriculums, the textbook is responding to market demands by slanting towards separatism and, in the writer's opinion, show contempt for the dominant culture (Ornstein, 1992). Conservatives, vigilant of standards, do not appear to take the textbook fight laying down: "When the Zulus have a Tolstoy, we will read him," said Saul Bellow (Pratt, 1990).

According to experts, there is another product of intolerance that breeds more intolerance, and that is the reluctance to speak out.

"What we say depends on what who we are talking to. We worry that if we speak our minds, we'll be misinterpreted as bigots or militants, that talking about differences

will exascerbate them" (Bullard, 1993, p. 58).

The researcher observed that in his own classroom; several students were reluctant to answer surveys honestly, some choosing even to skip over questions. Some students were afraid to put their names on it, or that others would see their paper as they passed it in. The researcher knows there's no way of knowing who's being honest in journals and who's merely telling him what they think he wants to hear.

Annette Townley, of the National Association of Mediation in Education admits that it isn't easy to open up. "When you start talking about racism, there are a lot of risks involved. Sometimes we are going to say things that are hurtful. We have to feel like we can make mistakes with each other" (Bullard, 1993, p. 58).

The causes of intolerance nationally do not differ from the city or classroom where the research takes place. If they are different, it's only by a matter of degree. Some of the causes are admittedly beyond the immediate scope of any intervention: the negative influence of parents, and government programs; the economy; the "culture of meanness"; and historical oppression. Other causes are more treatable and need to be, if assimilation is to take place: low self-esteem; stereotyping; ignorance of non-verbals; lack of pride and a sense of belonging; lack of values, role models, and work ethic; and a climate where fear and distrust prevent people from being honest. A

student journal touches on this, and other issues of causation. She writes:

> Racism, is caused by stupid people that look at just color. Life shouldn't have to be like that. I hope someday when my children come to school I hope they won't have to talk about it or take tests about it becasue it won't be here anymore. I hope they also won't be afraid of what they say. I hope they can say what they feel.

Chapter 3

THE SOLUTION STRATEGY

Review of the Literature

The history of the United States was written with bias. The dominant culture wrote the history, omitting cultures which they considered unimportant. In the 1700's, English culture dominated the American landscape. In fact, becoming American meant becoming a modified Englishman (Schwarz, 1995). In 1916, an immigrant guide for the Jews suggested that "to become American, forget your past, your customs, and your ideals." (Schwarz, 1995, p.62). The Anglo-Saxon elite of the early 1900's imposed their culture on those whom they considered minorities. These minorities, which were consumed by this White, Anglo-Saxon culture were, however, white and European themselves. People of color were not considered for the melting pot; they were not eligible for assimilation because of their race. "... The struggle over public culture is deeply tied to a historical legacy that affirms American character and national identity in terms that are deeply exclusionary, nativist, and racist" (Giroux, 1995, p.325).

Thomas Jefferson, for instance, was known for his vision of democracy and egalitarianism. He was interested in the abolition of slavery, however, not for the ideal that 'all men are created equal'; but for the removal of the Black race back to Africa, "beyond the reach of mixture" with the White race (Schwarz, 1995, p.65). Jefferson's ideas regarding religious and political tolerance did not include the Black race. He considered Blacks to be alien, inferior, and dangerous (Schwarz, 1995). America's founding fathers understood that "America was characterized by ethnic dominance, not ethnic pluralism. Moreover, building America required nearly 300 years of genocidal wars against Native Americans...These wars were resolved not by power sharing but by obliteration" (Schwarz, 1995, p. 64).

Students' lack of appreciation of culture and lack of tolerance can be changed. First, they must be exposed to other cultures. This way, they will be taught to accept and respect other cultures. From this, they develop an appreciation of those cultures and should be able to better adapt (Hoopes, 1975).

In order for students to become multicultural, educators must first gain an understanding of the views which define multiculturalism and multicultural education. Multicultural education is a major element of school reform in the 1990's. Furthermore, "multiculturalism has become a central discourse in the struggle over issues regarding national identity, the construction of historical

memory, the purpose of schooling, and the meaning of democracy" (Giroux, 1994). There are different perspectives on multiculturalism, primarily the liberal and conservative schools of thought. Both sides lay claim to being taken out of context, and both sides charge that multiculturalism, in practice, has been distorted.

One of the foremost spokesman for the "conservative" position is Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. a Pulitzer Prize-winning historian and, ironically, New Deal liberal (Diggins, 1988). Such credentials may suggest that Schlesinger's position is not only valid, but also closest to the social mainstream.

Conservatives admit that racism, whether overt or subconscious, is a problem. Schlesinger's view is that assimilation is the answer to the problem of racism, but that both sides must want to assimilate. Yet, if the "majority" shuns or scorns minorities, it should be no surprise that they retreat into a tribe of bitterness and separatism. As Schlesinger wrote, "the burden to make this a unified country lies as much with the complacent majority as with the sullen and resentful minorities" (Schlesinger, 1992, p. 19). Assimilation means "to become absorbed, to take in and incorporate as one's own" (Webster, 1966, p.89).

With regard to minorities, former Education Secretary William Bennett writes that the multicultural agenda, as defined by liberals, will divorce Blacks completely from the mainstream of American life and increase the alienation

that many Blacks feel toward the rest of our society and our institutions (Bennett, 1992).

Most Americans, White or non-White, while they may cherish their particular heritage, view themselves primarily as Americans, and not as Asians, Africans, Irish, Jews, or Hungarians. Proof of this lies in the growing number of marriages that run across racial and religious lines (Schlesinger, 1992). Nor is the "melting pot" a modern phenomenon. After the civil war, there was an effort to resettle freed slaves to the African country of Liberia. This was unsuccessful, due to the fact that Blacks were unwilling to surrender their new rights and citizenship. It was perhaps a freed slave who said it best in an 1877 letter to Senator Blanche Bruce: "We are not Africans now, but colored Americans, and are entitled to American citizenship" (Foner, 1988, pp. 599-600).

A major flaw in the liberal argument, according to Bill Bennett, is the assumption that 'identity' is synonymous with 'race' (Bennett, 1988). Schlesinger (1992) feels that there is a unique American identity. Yet, while a common language, morality, culture, and institutions hold the country together; the American identity is never fixed, but is constantly changing with the population. Therefore, as the composition of mainstream America changes, the American identity will transform and tolerance will develop naturally.

Consensually, the liberals and conservatives agree

that it is good to have a curriculum that mentions Blacks within mainstream America, or features Black authors. Schlesinger agrees that a decent curriculum will offer a sense of variety and adaptibility of cultures and illustrate the ability of individuals to overcome obstacles. That is the difference between the way conservatives and liberals envision a multicultural curriculum. This conservative approach puts more emphasis on assimilation, unity, and role-modeling. Conservatives wish not to emphasize negative experiences, divisions, and injustices.

By contrast, liberal multiculturalists tend to emphasize cultural differences and negative experiences. They maintain that, taken to extremes, multicultural educa tion not only goes against the time-honored 'melting pot' theory, but it perpetuates myths and grossly distorts history, even going so far as to preach the supremacy of a race (Bennett 1992). "To deny the essentially European origins of American culture is to falsify history," writes Schlesinger (1992).

Multiculturalism, as defined by the liberal perspective, evolved out of the 'Black Power' movement of the 1960's. This radical philosophy called for a separation of Blacks from White Society in order for the Black community to acquire self-esteem, self-appreciation, and to realize that racism was not their fault. Carmichael promoted attainment of these goals by "any means necessary" which included violence (Carmichael, 1967). Carmichael

and other Black authors of the 1960's have maintained that what prevented the assimilation of Blacks into American society was the color of their skin. As more Blacks entered universities in the last thirty years, they led student movements to have their culture included in history curricula. Other minorities followed suit.

According to James Baldwin, issues concerning multiculturalism are fundamentally questions of race and identity (Giroux, 1994).

> Academic culture has become a contested space primarily because groups that have been traditionally excluded from the public school curriculum and from the ranks of higher education are now becoming more politicized and are attending higher education institutions in increasing numbers. One consequence of this developing politics of difference has been a series of struggles by subordinate groups over access to educational resources, gender and racial equality, curriculum content, and the disciplinary-based organizations of academic departments" (Giroux, 1994).

This being the case, the pragmatic model of multiculturalism was usurped by minorities in favor of the liberal model. For example, it would no longer be enough to teach about Harriett Tubman or how Polish immigrants worked to adapt to a new country. Instead, multiculturalism characterized Africa as the birthplace of science,

philosophy, religion, and medicine (Schlesinger 1992). In Portland, Oregon classrooms, students have been taught that Africans visited America before Columbus (Schlesinger, 1992). Many of these theories rest on the assumptions that Egypt, a country on the African continent, represents "Black" Africa. According to Professor Afaf Marsot of UCLA,this is a myth based on "the flimsiest" of evidence. The Egyptians were a mixed population, as all Mediterraneans were mixed (Schlesinger 1992).

"To put it plainly, it seems that the original goals of multiculturalism have been seriously distorted" (Stotsky, 1995, p. 607). Richard Bernestein is quoted as stating, "it is a universe of ambitious good intentions that has veered off the high road of respect for difference and plunged into a foggy chasm of dogmatic assertions, wishful thinking, and pseudo scientific pronouncements about race and sex" (Stotsky, 1995).

Liberals seek to expose the historical dynamics of racism within our pluralistic society, and develop a curriculum that makes students aware of the causes of racism. This curriculum is guided by a relationship that liberals find between multiculturalism and democracy.

> "Multicultural political democracy means that this country was not built by and for only one group--Western Europeans; that our country does not have only one language--English; or only one religion --Christianity; or only one economic philosophy

-corporate capitalism. Multicultural democracy means that the leadership within our society should reflect the richness, colors, and diversity expressed in the lives of all our people. Multicultural democracy demands new types of power sharing and reallocation of resources necessary to great economic and social development for those who have been systematically excluded and denied (Giroux, 1994, p. 338)

According to Henry Giroux, a democratic multi-culturalism is one that offers a new language which allows students to move between disciplinary borders and to travel within zones of cultural difference. He says that this is a language that challenges the boundaries of cultural and racial difference as sites of exclusion and discrimination. Giroux says that a democratic multicultural curriculum would rewrite the script of cultural difference as part of a broader attempt to expand and deepen the imperatives of a multicultural and multiracial democracy (Giroux, 1994). Each day, teachers and students must engage in acts of cultural translation and negotiation. Schools are where young people learn how American culture is organized, which cultures are worthy of valorization, which cultures are unworthy of public esteem (Giroux, 1994). Finally,

> "Multiculturalism doesn't simply mean numerical plurality of different cultures, but rather a community which is creating, guaranteeing, encouraging

> spaces within which different communities are able to grow at their own pace. At the same time, it means creating a public space in which comunities are able to interact, enrich the existing culture and create a new consensual culture in which they recognize reflections of their own identity (Giroux, 1994).

The complex dynamics of multicultural awareness also exist in the world of business and manufacturing. In a study conducted by Adler (1986), sixty organization development consultants described the impact of cultural diversity on their organizations and jobs. Two-thirds said they saw no impact. Of the remaining one-third, only one consultant saw it as a positive.

A survey of management research published in twenty-four academic and professional journals over the last decade (Adler, 1986) reveal that fewer than five percent of the articles refer to either international or domestic multi-culturalism. Yet as Adler states, "cultural diversity does exist and affects the way in which we operate within the organization" (Adler, p.230) Frequent problems involved communication, integration, work styles, and cultural understanding. Advantages were noted when the organization wanted to expand its perspective, approach, range of ideas, operations, product line, or marketing strategies. As managers struggle with issues of cultural diversity and its possible advantages and disadvantages, it is possible to make a connection with similiar struggles that go on

at public schools across America.

From a national viewpoint, Alan Singer (1994) voices his opposition to the views of Arthur Schlesinger and Diane Ravitch, a former undersecretary of education in the Bush administration. Singer takes issue with their accusations that many multiculturalists are substituting "ethnic cheerleading" for scholarship and that a psychological therapy has replaced the actual teaching of history. Furthermore, Singer is not pleased with their version of the history of the United States that was incorporated into the recently reformed California curriculum and used as a basis for the new Houghton-Mifflin social studies series. Singer feels their Eurocentric approach defines all American people as immigrants, accepts many traditional myths about American history, and that in their view, past injustices have been largely eliminated.

Singer feels that those individuals in society who fail to assimilate are actually victims of broader social problems rather than people who lack initiative or personal responsibility. Singer is equally concerned with our young people; "overlooked" in our schools and stereotyped in the media, they end up attracted to the ideas of charismatic ethnic politicians like Louis Farrakhan.

With regard to the issue of appropriate textbooks, a leading opinion is that of Sandra Stotsky (1995). Her studies have determined that literature selections have broadened their scope, to include more works by women and

nonwhite authors. The influence of British works has been lessened.

Consequently, Stotsky raises concern that there is a very narrow range of European ethnic groups. People of European descent make up a larger population of the U.S. population than all affirmative action categories combined. Yet, these groups are barely acknowledged in many anthologies. Stotsky infers that it would not be at all surprising if students emerged with a warped view of American history and of who Americans really are. For example, since Russian Jews are not African, Hispanic, Asian, or Native American, it would still be incorrect to classify them as "mainstream".

Stotsky also cites a tendency of curriculums to include works from North, Central, and South America. She feels there is a danger in expanding the boundaries of American literature beyond the borders of United States. "By making 'American' literature cover so many different groups and countries, we clearly diminish student' sense of their own identity as Americans" (Stotsky, 1995, p. 609). While Stotsky is very critical of which groups are and are not getting coverage, she should be more clear on specifically what balanced coverage would be.

Insights by minorities in the literary field offer good insight. Keiko Narahashi recalled the difficulties of moving to North Carolina from Japan when she was six years old. Trying to assimilate into an all-White school,

and later, an all-Black school, she felt very much like an outsider. It was while attending art school that Keiko realized the importance of her Japanese roots, and exercised her artistic talent as a Japanese American. "It is only recently that I have felt that my background, my memories, are legitimate to use, and that they can be appreciated by American children of all kinds" (Narashi, 1992, p.31)

According to Gary Soto, a Mexican-American author, literature should reflect reality . He feels that there are plenty of books which deal with social issues, but not enough that deal with identity, or the heart of who people are (Lewis, 1994). Clara Villarosa, owner of an African-American bookstore, expresses her concern about depicting blacks in everyday settings, as opposed to African or Caribbean folktales (Lewis, 1994).

Lawrence Yep, author of Dragon of the Lost Sea says, "If you visit another culture, or even read about it, you look at your own culture with new ideas. You understand your own culture more deeply" (Lewis, 1994, p. 39). The acclaimed author of The Color Purple, (1982) Alice Walker, knew poverty and fame, struggle and fullfillment, violence and admiration. Her personal journey as a writer, woman, and Black American reflect the changes in the status of Blacks and women in America over the past forty years. She acknowledges that her heritage, which encompassed the whole gamut of experiences, allowed her to arrive at a true sense of herself and her art (Laskin, 1991).

Perhaps one of the most applicable solutions comes from British author, E.M. Forster, who wrote Three Cheers For Democracy during World War II. Included in this book is his essay, "Tolerance". Forster advocates tolerance, rather than love, as a way for mankind to get along. He states that while love is indeed a great force in private life, love in public affairs does not work as it has been tried again and again. Forster admits tolerance has been viewed in a negative way. It is dull and boring. It means putting up with people. Forster strongly feels that tolerance is the only force which will enable different races, classes, and interests to work together (Forster, 1993). Tolerance calls upon an individual to: not be huffy, touchy, irritable, and revengeful. Tolerance is a sound solution to racism.

Cheney (1994) offers three suggestions to educators seeking a change in current curriculum. Because multiculturalism is part of the American identity, she strongly believes it should be taught in schools and colleges. There are three principles which should guide these efforts. Multicultural education should tell the truth, seek evidence, evaluate information, and weigh conflicting opinions. It should also be about more rather than less; more for everyone, rather than less for anyone. Finally, it should be about what we share as well as what sets us apart.

A solution Stern (1994) offers is in the area of

curriculum reform. In her opinion, de-emphasizing White, western culture in the teaching of literature and history is essential. She quotes Banks who states,

> "The movement is designed to restructure educational institutions so that all students, inclusing middle class white males, will acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to function effectively in a culturally and ethnically diverse nation and world" (Stern, 1994, p. 28-29)

Singer (1994) offers solutions that would include "multiple perspectives": more than one way to view and understand an idea, enabling students and teachers to explore the similiarities and differences in human experiences, and the necessity for dialogue to express different points of view and acknowledge diverse opinions. He would encourage students to become active learners, and be appreciative and respectful of the rich differences that exist in individual cultures.

He states, "Multiculturalism is not 'feel good' history or the watering down of literature; it is an expanded and more detailed picture of social, cultural, and intellectual history of our country and of our world" (Singer, 1994, p. 286).

In conclusion, Stotsky (1995) focuses on the goal of multicultural education which is to teach students to understand and appreciate our common heritage as Americans, as well as each other's ethnic heritage. These solutions

can be achieved by revising curriculums, exposing students to other cultures, and generally cultivating tolerance. In addition, the teacher must be mindful that the implementation focuses on positive examples of ethnic and cultural relationships in America. Stories, whether they be fictitious or historical, should illustrate how cultures overcome differences and obstacles to cooperate and interract on a positive level. Emphasis should be placed on values that hold all cultures together, such as friendship, honesty, responsibility, work, and above all, tolerance. Students and teachers should both become active learners in the area of multicultural relationships.

Project Outcomes and Solution Components

The terminal objective of this problem intervention is related to pre- and post- attitudinal surveys, cultural knowledge quiz, quick writes, and journal entries.

As a result of curricular emphasis on cultural assimilation and multiculturalism, during the period of September 1, 1995 to January 30, 1996, the targeted eighth grade language arts class will increase their tolerance of other cultures, as measured by attitudinal surveys, quick writes, rubrics, and journal entries.

In order to accomplish the terminal objective, the following processes are necessary:

1. Collect and/or create resources that will foster tolerance through a multicultural approach.

2. Establish strategies for implementing learning

activities that will foster students' appreciation and tolerance of their own cultures and of other cultures.

3. Construct curricular units reflecting multicularism.

Action Plan for Intervention

I. A. Setting: Targetted 8th grade language arts class. Content will be implemented in the literature component of the class throughout the first semester of school. Stories will be covered on the average of one per week, for a total of 16 weeks.

B. Hook: 1. Show the class photographs to informally "quiz" kids and discuss as a class.

2. Do Icebreaker "The Form" from p.17-19 in Kohl's book Developing Intercultural Awareness. Objective: To explore how we are conditioned to a certain culture, and how confusing a foreign culture may be to others.

3. Follow up with Resource 4, p. 25-27 in Kohl's book. Discuss, one statement at a time. Objective: to introduce

students to the concept of generalizations.

C. 1. Attitudinal survey
2. Multicultural knowledge survey
3. Personal data
4. Journal Entry: "Should we study other people's culture? Why? Support your answer."

II. Materials:

A. Books

1. Literature and Language (1994). Eighth grade edition. New York: McDougall and Littell.

2. Mellon, James (1988). Bullwhip Days. New York: Avon Books.

B. Videos 1. Conrack
2. Brian's Song
3. La Bamba
4. Little Big Man

III. Strategies:

A. Reading. Readings will be done aloud

in class, so that they may be discussed and processed as needed.

B. Writing exercises. Within each story there are cultural issues. We want to look at both cultural distinctions and commonalities. It is best that the topics, while they are specifically geared toward the story, are rooted in the student's personal experience. (e.g.s. "write a journal entry on the best or worst advice you've ever received"...if advice was a topic inherent in the story)

B. Writing can take various forms:

1. journals-at least once a week.
2. essay-style assessment
3. speech
4. informative article
5. personal letter
6. movie review
7. movie "sequel"

C. Art, to illustrate comprehension

1. poster to illustrate story
2. comic strip

D. Skits and puppet shows

1. re-enact scenes from movie

2. re-enact Native American folktales

E. Guest speaker(s)

For Asian-American Unit, bring in Vietnam Vet to talk to class. Another option is to get speakers with opposing views of the war.

F. Field trip (optional)

Students will get to attend presentation of Lakota Indian Dance Troupe at Rock Valley College. There is cost involved, but we want to encourage as many students as possible to attend.

Chapter 4

PROJECT RESULTS

Historical Description of Intervention

The objective of this project was to heighten the students' tolerance of other ethnic groups. The implementation of pre and post attitudinal surveys, cultural knowledge quiz, quick writes, and journal entries were selected to measure the outcomes.

An identical attitudinal survey was given both before and after the intervention, to a targeted eighth grade language arts class of 26. The pre-intervention survey evaluated the students' existing beliefs toward learning about ethnic culture, including their own. This survey also evaluated how their attitudes were formed, as well as any current interaction with other cultures.

The second and identical component of this survey, given concurrently with that of the attititudinal survey, evaluated basic knowledge of other cultures. This was an objective, 10-item multiple choice quiz. Both this and the attitudinal survey took approximately 15 minutes to complete (Appendix A).

"Quick writes", an impromptu writing exercise in which students write a paragraph or two on any given topic,

was abandoned in favor of the journal and essay assignments. As the year progressed, weekly journal entries were of a more "fun" and personal nature, straying from cultural issues. The researcher returned to quick writes, maintaining the personal element, but focusing more closely on course content.

Cultural issues were addressed mainly in writing assignments, both short answer and essay. After reading a story or viewing a film, students were able to write on their choice of several pertinent cultural topics.

To break the ice and illustrate the issue of culture, the researcher selected students at random and showed them various photographs. They held images of famous Black people such as Aretha Franklin or Little Richard. Students were asked if they could identify these faces.

In order to give students a feel for how we are conditioned to the comfort of our own culture, they did an exercise called "the form". This activity, which took one class period, required them to complete a form, writing from right to left. The questions and writing on the form were bizarre and nonsensical, the intent being to give students a feeling of the alienation one must feel while trying to function within a foreign culture (Appendix B).

The final pre-assessment given to students was on generalizations and stereotyping. We discussed what a generalization was, and that they are harmful. The students were given a survey in which they indicated to what degree

they agreed with common generalizations regarding five racial groups (Appendix C).

The first journal entry was entitled "Should we study other people's cultures? Why or why not?" Students wrote at least a paragraph in response to this question.

For the first semester, students read and discussed stories from their literature textbook that pertained to each racial group. This was extended in February of the following year when Black History Month was observed. The intervention was altered as the researcher did a unit about Black poetry. Students read poems by Maya Angelou and Langston Hughes. They wrote reflective essays on them, then illustrated the poem of their choice (Appendix D).

Students also watched several relevant multicultural films and wrote essays in which they were to express their opinion of the film, as well as analyze their cultural content (Appendices E, F, G, H). There was some deviation here as far as film selection; students did not get to see Brian's Song, but did see Brother Future and Cool Runnings, films the researcher did not originally anticipate showing.

The majority of the intervention was based on the students reading short stories from the literature textbook. This textbook is in its second year of use, and was chosen by the district for its multicultural theme. In addition to reading aloud, two other reading strategies were used. Two stories were played on audio tape so that students

could follow along, and literature circles were used to read and share Native-American folktales in the textbook (Appendix I).

Originally, the researcher intended to use a range of writing assignments. The speech, personal letter, and the informative article were used for the first unit, although the students did not react favorably to them. Due to time constraints which arose during the semester, it was necessary to move away from many of these in favor of the essay. Students had a variety of writing prompts to choose from to get these essays started. When it came to the films, reflective essays were used as assessments, rather than "movie reviews" or "movie sequels".

One thing that affected the intervention and altered the amount of time the researcher had to work with were the new and mandatory state assessments. These assessments interrupted the intervention as they broke the continuity of the multicultural theme and took a week or two to complete.

The students got to do an art project for several of the readings. This project consisted of illustrating a scene from the story or poem of their choice (Appendix J). One deviation in art projects from the intervention was that comic strips were not used. The researcher felt that this particular task would be too time-consuming, and, to some students, intimidating. Skits and puppet shows were not done either, for some of these same reasons.

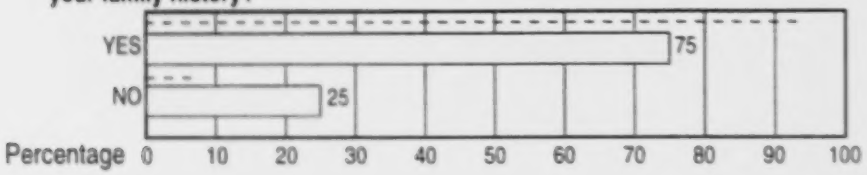
In the Asian-American unit, one story dealt with the topic of Vietnam refugees. This led into the issue of the Vietnam conflict. Veterans are themselves a culture; they share a unique and common experience for which they should be recognized, and society must be sensitive to their needs and problems. Students read a story about a boy whose father was a vet and suffered from flashbacks. Two speakers came in and talked to my class, one being a parent who served in the war, the other a local man who counseled vets who suffered from flashbacks.

Earlier in the intervention, there were a couple extracurricular activities of multicultural significance. Approximately one-third of the students voluntarily attended a presentation by the Lakota Indian Dance Troupe at a local community college. Students also saw the "Buffalo Soldiers" at an all-school assembly. The "Buffalo Soldiers" were Black cavalry regiments formed after the Civil War. Today a group of young black men, who are ex-juvenile offenders, have reenacted the "Buffalo Soldiers" and at this assembly, students watched them march and drill.

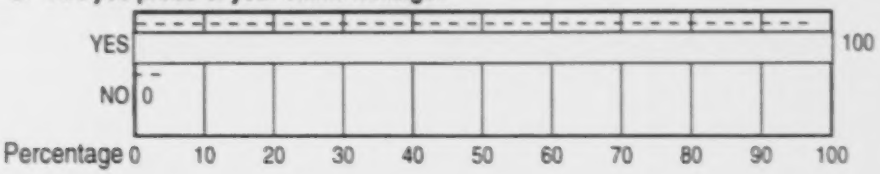
Presentation and Analysis of the Results

In order to assess the effects of multicultural education on students' tolerance, students took the same attitudinal survey that they had taken before the intervention. This data is presented in Figure 6, which measures students' receptivity to multiculturalism.

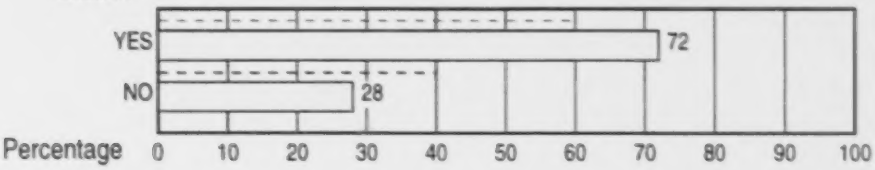
1. "Do you think that it is important to talk to your parents and grandparents about your family history?"



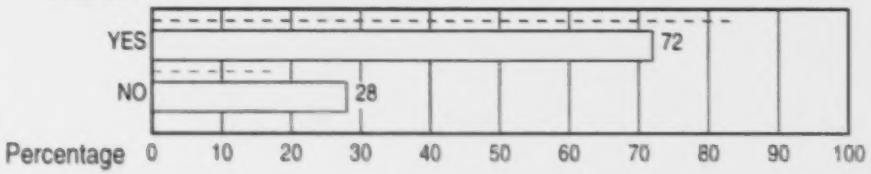
2. "Are you proud of your ethnic heritage?"



3. "Do you think it is important to learn more about your ethnic background in school?"



4. "Do you think it is important to learn more about other ethnic backgrounds in school?"



5. "By studying other cultures, do you feel that you will become more tolerant of other ethnic groups?"

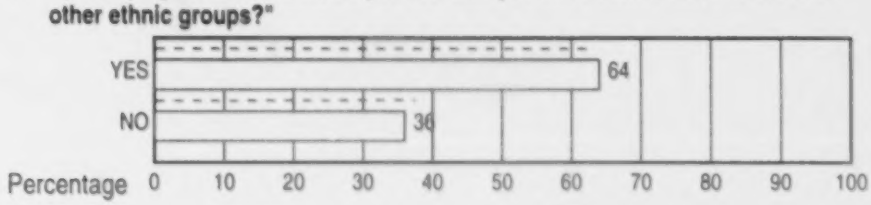


Figure 6

STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNICITY

March 26, 1996

The data suggest that while students are more conscious of ethnicity, it is more of a self-centered consciousness. One hundred percent of the students say that they are proud of their ethnic heritage. Almost three quarters of the students surveyed feel that it is important to learn about their ethnic background in school, a twelve percent improvement over last fall's response. Yet, over one-quarter of the students did not feel that it was important to talk to parents and grandparents about their family history. This shows a very significant change as last fall, less than ten percent felt this way. A possible explanation for twenty percent less of the students willing to talk to their ancestors about family history is a matter of psychology. Many adolescents tend to be more autonomous at this age, and may shun their family as a result. Their heritage would be something that matters little, and this phase sees them becoming more self-centered in their attitude.

Tolerance means being able to co-exist and appreciate other ethnic groups. In this regard, the numbers are not so encouraging. When asked if they think it is important to learn about other people's ethnic backgrounds, the number of students saying "yes" fell by about ten percent. Almost one-third said that it wasn't important and over one-third doubted that it would make them more tolerant, a slight increase over last fall.

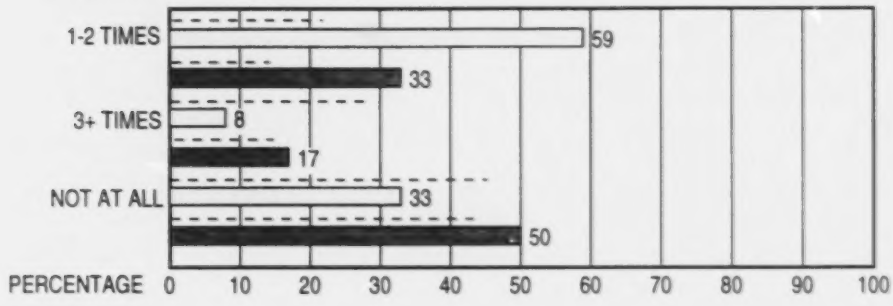
This data would then indicate that while the majority

of students are still receptive to multiculturalism, since the intervention, they have become less receptive. With an average of twelve percent of the students reversing their opinion to one that is more narrow and cynical, this change is significant. The self-centeredness previously mentioned may account for this, as well as students becoming weary and annoyed with the multicultural theme. "Why are we always talking about this stuff?" was a question posed to the researcher which sums up the boredom and possibly the resistance of several students.

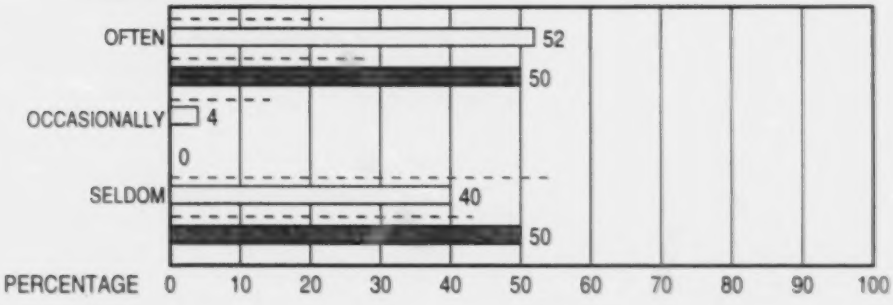
Figure 7 measures the root of students' beliefs and how they put those beliefs into practice. Television is still playing a dominant role is students' lives, at about the same level that it did last fall; the only significant change being that Blacks are watching TV more and reading less. A couple of the questions have to do with students participating in cultural events, or taking an interest in another culture's music or fashion. The data suggests that the students are at least "dabbling", with the categories of 1-2 times and "often" going up two to one over what they were last fall. It is to be noted that students of both ethnic groups are claiming friends from other ethnic groups, about twenty percent more than than last fall. The most dramatic growth was in the category of "many friends in another ethnic group", and the number of Blacks to whom this applies nearly doubled. In general, students are interested in and associating more with other

cultures. It is unclear if the intervention had subtle effects, below the students' level of awareness. Attitudes may have been affected in ways that were not cognitive.

6. "In the past year, how often have you attended an event or festivity from a culture other than your own?"*



7. "How often do you listen to music, display art, or wear a fashion from a culture other than your own?"*



8. "From which source below do you get most of your information about your ethnic group?"

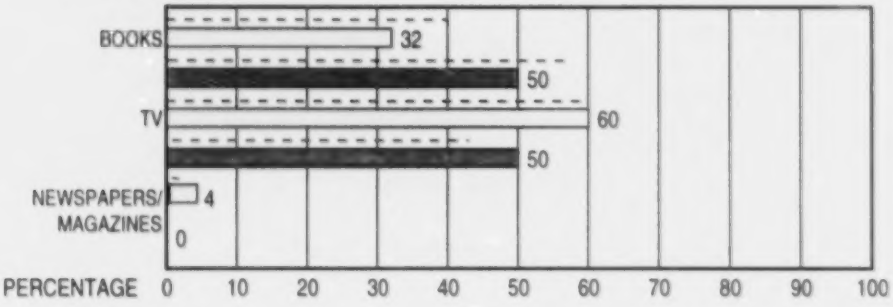
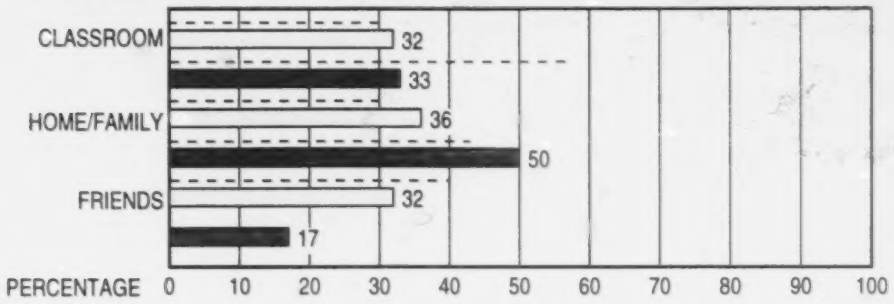


Figure 7

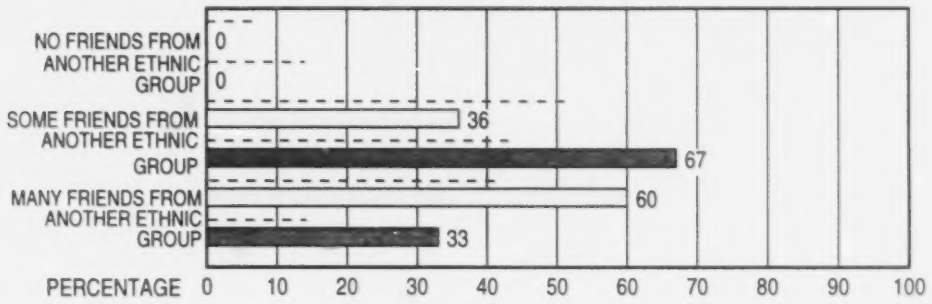
STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNICITY

March 26, 1996

9. "In your opinion, where do you get your attitudes toward other ethnic groups?"



10. "Which of the following best describes you?"*



11. "Do you feel anger or hostility towards a different ethnic group?"*

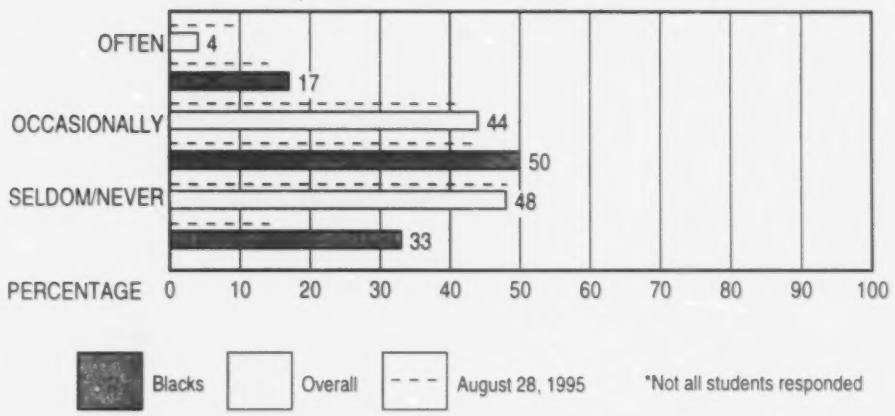


Figure 7
STUDENT ATTITUDES TOWARD ETHNICITY
March 26, 1996
Cont.

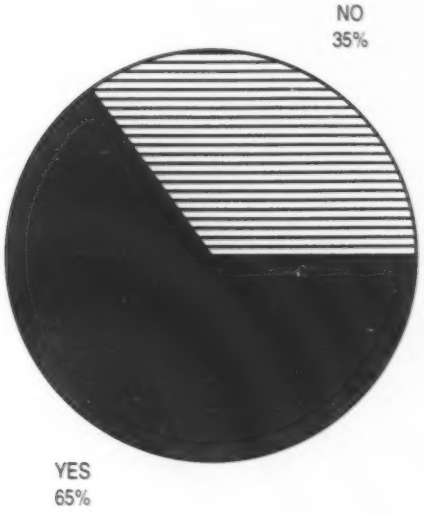
Students saying they got their attitudes from the classroom stayed about the same. This too, is possibly a sign of the ineffectiveness of a multicultural curriculum. A growing number of students say that they get their attitudes towards other ethnic groups at home and from their family; the number of students saying that they got their attitudes from friends fell by almost ten percent. The researcher wondered how the family could become so influential to autonomous students who had grown reluctant to discussing their heritage with parents and grandparents. It is perhaps more puzzling that the role of the peer group would wane at an age when the peer group's role is so strong. A partial explanation may be that the issue of family heritage may be practically non-existent, and not addressed on a conscious, overt level. Attitudes toward other ethnic groups, however, are more apt to arise within the family, and in everyday situations. A home environment may tolerate racist attitudes and comments, but schools cannot.

Many times, the negative, critical spirit is communicated and passed along in a more subtle way. In this case, only a student with a conscience and a keen sense of right and wrong may be able to see through it. It is also possible that a student would be more intolerant, simply because it's negative and ornery in nature. This way, even the most rebellious student would not take notice as an attitude of intolerance creeps into their psyche.

The most tell-tale question, "Do you feel anger or hostility towards a different ethnic group?" produced data that was not encouraging or indicative of the success of the intervention. Blacks went up in the category of "often", although slightly. Half of them felt anger occasionally, and a third fell into the ideal category of "seldom or never". The class overall felt anger a little less often and more on an occasional basis. Almost half the class seldom or never felt anger towards another ethnic group. While these statistics are not entirely bad, they did not change enough to indicate success, and the researcher finds the growth in anger among blacks, however small, to be a discouraging sign.

Figure 8 supports the data of the attitudinal survey which states that the students are willing to study other cultures. This data, based on a journal entry, indicates that it was helpful, and the leading themes were again increasing tolerance and variety in life. The negative comments focused more on process than product, things within the curriculum which could always be modified. The lone comment of "boring" is subjective and inevitable in any classroom. One curricular element on the positive side was that the students liked movies, and that film conveys multicultural messages better than a story that is read. This comes as no surprise to the researcher.

Topic: "Was it helpful to study other cultures? Why or why not?"



POSITIVE COMMENTS FOCUSED ON:		CRITICISMS FOCUSED ON:	
	No. of Students		No. of Students
Tolerance	5	Already knew these things	3
Enrichment	4	Lack of white culture	2
Commonalities	2	Overlap w/history class	1
Effectiveness of Videos	2	Ineffective	1
		Boring	1

Figure 8
DOMINANT THEMES IN STUDENT JOURNALS
April 16, 1996

After contrasting the results of the survey regarding stereotypes in student thinking, as shown in Table 9, it would appear that negative stereotyping has gone down. The only exception would be a modest gain in the stereotype of whites being prejudiced, a five percent increase. In that the percentage of Blacks agreeing with this went from one hundred to forty-four percent, it is apparent that whites now believe themselves to be prejudice. This could be due to a couple of reasons: the lack of balance in the curriculum ("white culture" being played down) and also the perception that whites are somehow at fault for racial injustice. This could be due to the influence of the media, or the dominant posture Blacks take at the target school. The researcher heard confidential student complaints that they had felt intimidated by this attitude, as evidenced by various non-verbals and expressions of "bullying".

One positive gain is that Blacks have a better self-image, with some of the stereotypes shrinking two to one. Still, almost one-quarter of all students feel that Whites are snobbish, almost half believe Whites to be prejudicial and one-third feel that Blacks are in gangs. These are still the most common perceptions in our society and the data indicates that they do not die easily, and that there is much work to be done. The remaining ethnic categories saw the numbers go down slightly, yet leaving relatively large numbers of students believing stereotypes of Hispanics, Asians, and Native Americans. It is to be

noted that the these portions of the intervention were less concentrated, and that the stories pertaining to these cultures only really reinforced them.

Table 9

STEREOTYPES IN STUDENT THINKING

March 26, 1996

	Agree 3/26/96	Disagree 3/26/96	Agree 8/29/95	Disagree 8/29/95
WHITE PEOPLE				
Snobs	23% (34%)	77% (66%)	37% (83%)	63% (17%)
Greedy	15% (33%)	85% (67%)	30% (50%)	63% (50%)
Prejudicial	42% (44%)	58% (56%)	37% (100%)	50% (0%)
BLACK PEOPLE				
Lazy	12% (29%)	85% (70%)	30% (33%)	63% (67%)
On Welfare	15% (32%)	85% (64%)	30% (67%)	63% (33%)
In Gangs	35% (62%)	46% (38%)	53% (67%)	37% (33%)
NATIVE AMERICANS				
Drunks	12% (19%)	88% (81%)	17% (50%)	77% (50%)
Live on Reservations	27% (7%)	73% (93%)	10% (17%)	83% (83%)
Spiritual	57% (73%)	43% (27%)	67% (83%)	23% (17%)
HISPANICS				
Don't Speak English	23% (32%)	77% (68%)	30% (17%)	67% (83%)
Good Physical Laborers	35% (50%)	65% (50%)	43% (50%)	47% (50%)
Prefer Hot, Spicy Food	50% (69%)	50% (31%)	63% (67%)	27% (33%)
ASIAN AMERICANS				
Shy	39% (48%)	61% (52%)	43% (83%)	43% (17%)
Smart	47% (62%)	50% (38%)	53% (83%)	33% (17%)
Talk Funny	20% (31%)	69% (69%)	27% (67%)	63% (33%)

Note: Black students' response in parentheses.

It is difficult to assess which components of the intervention had the most impact. However, the data in Table 10 would suggest that students overall like movies better as a medium, hardly surprising to an age group that gets so much of their input from televison. All but one movie consistently scored in the upper tiers as far as enjoyment level, and the most popular interventions above all were both movies.

The researcher examined where the most votes fell to determine popularity or to what extend an intervention promoted tolerance. If a winning category was a "1" or "2", a story would be popular, or good for building tolerance. The data in Table 10 seems to indicate that students enjoy stories slightly more than they grow in tolerance. Eleven scores fell in the top tier of enjoyment level, and only eight in the tolerance category. Blacks also enjoyed the intervention slightly more than they grew in tolerance, by a comparable score of twelve to ten. It is to be noted that the margin is the same with Blacks as it is with the general population. This may suggest the Blacks are in sync it the general population in their thinking.

In the tolerance category, it can also be noted that the score is too close between the upper and lower tier, as several statistics are tied and/or fall in the middle. Blacks and overall scores both fell within the upper tier seven times. Again, they are in sync, and no one's

appreciation grew in greater proportion.

Table 10
CURRICULUM IMPACT SURVEY
April 8, 1996

	Enjoyment Level				Did it promote tolerance or appreciation of other cultures?			
	+ 1	2	3	4 -	+ 1	2	3	4 -
(1) Poems: M. Angelou & Langston Hughes	12.5%	**37.5%**	**37.5%**	12.5%	17%	**39%**	26%	17%
	(40%)	**(50%)**	(10%)	(0%)	(33%)	**(50%)**	(17%)	(0%)
(2) Movie: Brother Future	32%	**44%**	20%	4%	17%	**50%**	17%	17%
	(50%)	(33%)	(17%)	(0%)	**(33%)**	(17%)	**(33%)**	(17%)
(3) Movie: Conrack	24%	29%	**36%**	12%	15%	24%	**40%**	21%
	(67%)	(0%)	(33%)	(0%)	(17%)	**(49%)**	(17%)	(17%)
(4) Story: "Banana Tree"	4%	16%	**40%**	**40%**	4%	20%	**40%**	36%
	(17%	(17%)	**(33%)**	**(33%)**	(17%)	**(33%)**	**(33%)**	(17%)
(5) Story: "Harriett Tubman"	22%	**48%**	17%	13%	22%	**30%**	26%	22%
	(48%)	(17%)	(17%)	(17%)	**(50%)**	(33%)	(17%)	(0%)
(6) Story: "Once Upon a Time When We Was Colored"	**39%**	22%	13%	26%	22%	**30%**	22%	26%
	(100%)	(0%)	(0%)	(0%)	**(80%)**	(20%)	(0%)	(0%)
(7) Movie: Cool Runnings	**74%**	17%	0%	9%	**30%**	**30%**	13%	22%
	(66%)	(17%)	(0%)	(17%)	**(50%)**	(33%)	(0%)	(17%)
(8) Story: "White Mice"	30%	**35%**	17%	17%	16%	16%	**40%**	28%
	(50%)	(33%)	(0%)	(17%)	**(29%)**	**(29%)**	(13%)	**(29%)**
(9) Story: "Foul Shots"	24%	**44%**	24%	8%	20%	28%	**36%**	16%
	(50%)	(33%)	(17%)	(0%)	(43%)	(0%)	**(57%)**	(0%)
(10) Movie: LaBamba	**61%**	22%	9%	9%	20%	**35%**	30%	13%
	(50%)	(33%)	(17%)	(0%)	(33%)	(17%)	**(50%)**	(0%)
(11) Story: "Von"	12%	**36%**	28%	24%	13%	21%	**42%**	25%
	(50%)	(17%)	(17%)	(17%)	**(50%)**	(17%)	(33%)	(0%)
(12) Story: "Stop the Sun"	9%	33%	**42%**	17%	4%	24%	44%	28%
	(20%)	**(40%)**	(29%)	(20%)	(20%)	(20%)	**(40%)**	(20%)
(13) Speaker: Vietnam Vet	18%	18%	18%	**46%**	14%	**32%**	27%	27%
	(17%)	(17%)	(0%)	**(50%)**	**(40%)**	(0%)	(17%)	(33%)
(14) Story: "Dancer"	14%	27%	23%	**36%**	**45%**	18%	32%	**45%**
	(17%)	(17%)	**(40%)**	(17%)	(17%)	**(40%)**	(17%)	(17%)
(15) Story: "Spotted Eagle & Black Crow""	9%	**43%**	26%	22%	18%	9%	**36%**	**36%**
	(17%)	(0%)	**(33%)**	(17%)	**(33%)**	(0%)	(17%)	(17%)
(16) Movie: "Little Big Man"	29%	**33%**	17%	21%	25%	17%	**33%**	25%
	(67%)	(0%)	(17%)	(17%)	**(33%)**	(17%)	**(33%)**	(17%)

+1 = Highest
2 = OK, on the high side
3 = Fair, on the low side
- 4 = Lowest

Note: Black students' response in parenthesis.

In some cases, students did not respond, or a "DR" (Doesn't Remember) or Ab (Absent).

The researcher made some interesting observations along the way, and had some noteworthy experiences. Blacks seemed to get uncomfortable and defensive when the race issue was raised. Even after the purpose of discussion was explained, or mere issues of classroom management were raised, the researcher was deemed "prejudiced". The researcher was also targeted in student complaints more frequently than ever in his teaching career. When the researcher took an active interest in getting to know his Black students, and reach out to help them academically, he did notice resistance and distrust. One student wrote "you try to be everyone's friend, and you try too hard, instead of letting nature take its course". "Be a teacher not a friend", advised another. This would not indicate success in building tolerance or the mutual trust which is a part of it.

The researcher is privileged to serve on his school's building committee, where staff complaints are heard and rectified. When several staff members raised concerns that the Black History Assembly, and parts of it, were inappropriate, the building committee meeting grew quite hostile, with voices raised and tears shed. The advisor of the Black student group responded quite vehemently, both verbally and in written form (Appendix K).

The researcher also noticed suppressed anger among whites, or "white backlash". This too, would be non-existent, had the environment been impacted significantly

by multiculturalism.

An example may be the essay in which students were to analyze poems by Maya Angelou. A black student, seeing a positive message, and the common value of self-sufficiency, writes:

> Maya is bringing to me and other readers a woman who is strong and very independent. She doesn't want help from anyone. To me, this poem says that when you get old, it isn't about being weak and tired all the time, it's about helping yourself, and doing stuff on your own. If a white person had written this poem, it would be written the same way, because it doesn't matter about the color of the skin, but what's in the mind.

In analyzing a different poem, by a different poet, Langston Hughes, a White student writes:

> ...if a black cop shot a white soldier, no one would have made a big deal out of it. The poem related to the way things are today, because the blacks do the same thing. Like the Rodney King crap; during that, a white trucker was dragged out of his truck and beaten badly, and not much happened. I don't think the guy who did it went to jail and people got it on tape to prove it. That may sound racist, but it is true, ain't (sic) it?

The researcher also had White parents question the multicultural curriculum, asking why we did so much Black

history. Parents themselves have questionable attitudes, which undoubtedly are passed along to their children. One interesting example of this is a conversation the researcher had at the parent-teacher conferences. A student's father expressed dismay with his daughter's racial attitudes. The researcher said that this was unfortunate, as his daughter would have to deal with minorities in the real world. To this the father replied, "We're in a socio-economic level where she doesn't have to deal with the elements that she sees here." Is it any wonder our students lack tolerance and appreciation of other ethnic groups?

Conclusion

Although some statistics look promising, it is doubtful that this multicultural intervention had any significant impact as far as increasing student tolerance and appreciation of other cultures. The statistics that did change for the better, did not change enough to suggest any meaningful improvement in the students' attitudes. There still seems to be a self-centeredness among the students in general, which nullifies thinking of others. The defensive posture and unwarranted criticism that came from Black students during this intervention leads the researcher to feel that open discussion of racial issues only opens, and not heals wounds. Discussion

of the issue of prejudice causes all parties involved to be uncomfortable and is probably best left alone in order to preserve the peace. If good will is extended to another ethnic group, as in the case of the researcher and his students, it is generally rebuffed or received with suspicion.

The recommendation of this research is to maintain a multicultural approach, but only if it is downsized. This way, the approach itself is less obvious, and the teacher can focus more on the interventions which are the most effective and enjoyable. In this capacity, there are modifications that the researcher strongly recommends.

This researcher recommends that the intervention retain the use of certain films which have a multicultural theme, which are stimulating and will provoke thought. The writing assignments, whether they be essays or "quickwrites" are an excellent assessment to compliment the films.

The researcher would also keep the Black poetry unit, done in Black History Month. Any discipline should include minorities contribution to that discipline. Yet, for the sake of credibility, it should be light, and only when those contributions are significant. It is further advised that multicultural stories or other reading material be done only if it's been thoroughly reviewed first, and the teacher believes that the students would enjoy it in the first place. Unfortunately, many texts and curriculums

do not keep this factor in mind, and this researcher felt as if he were dispensing medicine. If multiculturalism is to be a worthwhile, enjoyable experience, then the material and the intervention should follow suit.

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Appendices

APPENDIX A

Attitudinal Survey

Circle either yes or no, y or n.

y n 1. Do you think it is important to talk to your parents and grandparents about your family history?

y n 2. Are you proud of your ethnic heritage?

y n 3. Do you think it is important to learn more about your ethnic background in school?

y n 4. Do you think it is important to learn more about other ethnic backgrounds in school?

y n 5. By studying other cultures, do you feel that you will become more tolerant and accepting of other ethnic groups?

6. In the past year, how often have you attended an event or a festivity from a culture other than your own?
   a) 1-2 times
   b) 3 or more times
   c) not at all

7. How often do you listen to music, display art, or wear a fashion characterized by another ethnic group?
   a) often
   b) occasionally
   c) seldom

8. From which source below do you get most of your information about your ethnic groups?
   a) books
   b) television and movies
   c) newspapers and magazines

9. In your opinion, where do you get your attitudes toward other ethnic groups?
   a) in the classroom
   b) at home/family
   c) from friends

10. Which of the following best describes you?
   a) I have no friends from other ethnic groups.
   b) I have some friends from other ethnic groups.
   c) I have many friends from other ethnic groups.

11. Do you feel anger or hostility toward a different ethnic group?
   a) often
   b) occasionally c) seldom or never

APPENDIX B

Myths and generalizations about culture

Generalizations are broad statements about an entire group of people. They are harmful. To be more sensitive, we must all identify and overcome generalizations.

Directions: Indicate, by checking one of the four choices, the degree to which you agree with these generalizations. The four choices are S.A. (strongly agree) A. (agree) D.(disagree) S.D. (strongly disagree) **To ensure accuracy in my research, please be honest!**

	S.A.	A.	D.	S.D.
White people:				
1. Snobs				
2. Greedy				
3. Prejudiced				
Black people:				
1.Lazy				
2.On welfare				
3.In gangs				
Native Americans:				
1. Drunks				
2. Live on Reservations				
3. Spiritual				
Hispanics:				
1. Don't speak English				
2. Good physical laborers				
3. Prefer hot, spicy food				
Asian-Americans				
1. Shy				
2. Smart				
3. Talk funny				

APPENDIX C

English Assignment-Essay

Directions:
1. Please hold on to your personal copies of the poems we discussed in class. This way, you can go back and review them. Do you remember these poems? Which one (or ones) should you talk about in your essay?

2. Actually, we are talking about two essays here. Together, they get one grade. When you are finished, staple both essays together and hand in.

Criteria: **ink**, theme paper
Due: Anytime the week of March 11-15th ("thank you, Mr. Fuhr")
Value: 100 points

Topic, Essay 1: The Poetry of Langston Hughes, 1-1½ pg. minimum

Topic, Essay 2: The Poetry of Maya Angelou, 2 pg. minimum.

Remember: Titles of poems are to be used in quotations when you mention them. Example: "I Dream a World".

Both your essays should answer these questions. You may answer all of them or you may choose to answer whichever questions you want, as long as your essay is long enough. 'Tis better to have a paper too long than too short, and if you really think on these poems, you'll have no problem filling up the pages.

1. Your favorite poem-why? Any you especially disliked? Why?

2. What is the poet trying to say?

3. What does the poem say to you?

4. What if a white person had written it? Would it be possible for them to write the same piece? How?

5. How does this poem relate to things today? If it were written today, what do you think it would say?

APPENDIX D

"Conrack"

Directions: On a seperate piece of theme paper, answer **any five** of the following questions. Use complete sentences.

1. If you were a student sitting in Mr. Conroy's classroom, what would you think of him at first?

2. What if Conroy had gotten really strict or whipped the kid like the principal expected him to?

3. When Mr. Skeffington visits the classroom, why didn't the kids respond, or know anything?

4. Who is Mr. Skeffington? What kind of man is he?

5. Mrs. Scott believed that blacks should aim to please whites, and then "everything will roll along just fine". Do you agree or disagree? Support your answer.

6. If you were Conroy, would you have taken the kids trick-or-treating, or should he have backed off? Why?

7. What is the "climax" of the story?

8. What is the ending of the story?

APPENDIX E

La Bamba Assignment

Choose one of the following topics. Remember that your essay should be in at least **one page**, in **ink**, and on **loose theme paper.**

1. Describe Ritchie's relationship with his family-mainly his mom and his brother. Discuss the personalities involved, Ritchie's attitude, his actions, and the situations that arose in his family. How did Ritchie's success affect the family? If you were Ritchie, what might you have done differently?

2. Write about Ritchie's relationship with Donna and her family. Use your imagination and think about whatever became of Donna **after** the movie ended...where is she today?

3. Where was the biggest conflict? Why? Now, review the movie: What did you like about it? What could've been done differently? Favorite or least favorite scenes and characters?

APPENDIX F

Little Big Man - Assignment

Write an essay on this movie. I want to know what your thoughts and feelings were as you watched it.

If you see something in the movie that you may want to comment on, I suggest that you jot it down here. This way, you will remember it for later, when you are writing it.

Consider these questions:

1. How did he adapt to other cultures and lifestyles? Use examples.

2. What did you learn about the culture of the American Indian, and their spiritual beliefs?

3. If it were you, was there ever a situation in the film where you would have made a different choice or have done something differently?

Length: At least one page

Ink

Due: Either Thursday or at the end of class (you might be able to do this if you take enough notes the first three days)

OR...when we return from Christmas break.

There may be time to work on it at the end of class on Thursday.

92

APPENDIX G

Writing Assignment for film **Brother Future**

Length: Minimum of 1½ pages for an A. Please do not write on the back. Have two pages stapled together.

Format: Ink, Theme Paper. No "fringies" or big margins.

Due: By Friday, March 1st.
Grading: An A is worth **100 pts**, etc.
Note: If you're absent and want to watch the film, check it out from Mr. Fuhr.

Your Essay should address the these topics. Maybe not all of them, but most of them. I suggest giving each one a paragraph; first answer the question, then go into your opinion of this. **Your final paragraph** should sum up your feelings about the film as a whole. Did you like it? What did you learn?

1. Why is T.J. convinced that working the streets is better than school?

2. What does traveling to the past tell T.J. about the present?

3. Why is learning to read punishable by death on the plantation?

4. What does Mortilla mean when she tells T.J., "You're here for a purpose." What was that purpose?

5. Why is Zike so loyal to Master Cooper-even reporting the planned uprising?

6. How do you think T.J.'s life will change after his experience?

7. If you could go back to a time in history, what would it be and why?

P.S. - Your essay should address these points, or be from your point of view. Do NOT just regurgitate what the movie was about, and tell me what happened.

APPENDIX H

THE FORM

1. NAME _____
   FAMILY??
   BIRTH
2. YEARS _____
3. SEX YES _____
   NO _____
4. STATUS
   _____
5. DEGREES
   CHECKONEO,V,X
   PHD
   PDQ
   AM
   MA
   PM

6. FAVORITE COLOR
   _____
   WHY? _____
7. LANGUAGE
   YES ___ NO _____
8. IFENGLISH
   WHATKIND
   KOJAK
   REGAN
   EDITH
9. FAVORITEDISEASE

APPENDIX I

Literature Circles

Q: What are literature circles?
A: A way of covering literature. You read on your own and then share what you've read with other kids.

Q: So what are we supposed to do?
A: I'll give you five stories. Choose **any two** and read them to yourself. Then, after 15 minutes or so, get in a group and talk about them.

Q: How many in a group?
A: Four or five.

Q: Can we pick our own groups?
A: Yes, but if a group is too big, or people are left out, the teacher can do some rearranging.

Q: What are we supposed to talk about?
A: 1) Tell the group what you read and explain what the stories were about. The stories are short enough that you may be able to retell it. 2) Did you like it? Explain why or why not. After everyone in the group has talked about what they've read, you can discuss whether the stories were alike in any way.

Q: What pages are the stories on? Read any of them?
A: Choose two. Here they are:
1. "The Five Eggs", p. 674-5.
2. "The Souls in Purgatory" p. 676-77
3. "Aunty Misery" p.685-86
4. "It is Better To Die Forever" p. 683-84
5. "Strawberries" p. 695-97

Q: Why are we doing it this way?
A: Literature circles are a way of covering a lot of material in a short period of time. Also, I want to see if you can handle it.

Q: Handle what?
A: Working in groups; the freedom and responsibility that this activity calls for. (4-6 hrs. Please show that you can do it later in the day!)

Q: How long will this take?
A: One class period, normally. I'd say 15-20 minutes to read; then, another 15-20 minutes to discuss. When I'm satisfied or "feel" we've done it right.

Q: Any assignment on these?
A: No, not for the time being. Just read and discuss.

APPENDIX J

Tuesday:
We'll read and discuss the story "Dancer" pp. 32-36 in the book. This is on tape, so I'll play the tape and we'll all follow along.

Wed: Assignment ("Dancer") WS pp. 19-20, 21-23.
Time to work on, also journals.

Thurs: Check WS

Read and discuss "Spotted Eagle and Black Crow" pp. 711-714.

Assignment: Do a **poster** to illustrate the plot of any one of the stories we've read this week (including the ones we did in groups on Monday).

Friday: Time to work on the project. Bring crayons or colored pencils, etc.

Grading: 1) colored and outlined in black ink.
2) neat
3) "Does it look like they've spent their work time doing it? Or did they goof around and throw it together in 5 minutes?"
4) Does it show that they've read the story?
5) I consider effort, not whether or not you're a great artist...but it helps.

Dec. 18-21: **video:** Little Big Man One of the best. This film illustrates the Native American thing as well as the idea of adapting to other cultures. I think you'll like it!

There will probably be some writing assignment to go with the movie. TBA.

Appendix K

Staff Criticisms of Black History Assembly and Rebuttal

174. The "Black National" Anthem is inappropriate. who says? ; why?

175. In my opinion there is one "National Anthem," which is The Star Spangled Banner. There is no Black nation in this country. Let it be an "Anthem to the Black People of America." I resent the whole concept of a Black History program when Black History was never accessed. An american heritage program is more inclusive and more appropriate for ALL students!

176. Wouldn't it be nice if we could have a Hispanic Culture Assembly, a Southeast Asian Culture Assembly, a European Culture Assembly, a Native American Assembly, and an African Culture Assembly so that all students can learn something new about the different groups within our school. Shouldn't we being giving all of our students a chance to feel proud about who they are.

177. Am I the only one that thought that the story teller's story was sending a extremely inappropriate message to our students. My feeling was that as long as you have the gun, you are the one in control, or, someone gets in your way - pull out your gun.

178. I felt that the selection of the poetry read by the students should have been screened alot more. The poet read has some pretty rough language in it for this age group. Maya Angelo has many wonderful poems that are both appropriate and rich with meaning. Let's try the "Caged Bird," or some of her other well know works.

179. We could use a committee to plan interdisciplinary units or "programs" or other instructional devices for ALL cultures so that it is not a one-short deal and only once every year. I have several ideas on this, but need more than one person to do a good job of anything.

97

17a. The "Black National Anthem" is inappropriate.

To make such a statement, is to insult the entire Black Community and its heritage. Obviously this individual has no idea of the history of the song or the meaning of its words. I would like to know if the individual can even recite the Great Song. Its power, meaning, and spiritually uplifting tempo serve as a building block for the Black Community. The Black National Anthem does not spew words of hate. The Black National Anthem does not cater to those who want to keep the Black Community segregated and isolated. What the Black National Anthem does is celebrate the building of the Black Community in America. It also encourages achievement in the face of insurmountable circumstances. I encourage the individual, as an "educated adult," to do more research before spouting out these words of ignorance.

17b.

To the individual who believes in one National Anthem, the "Star Spangled Banner." I must say that I agree that there is only one Star Spangled Banner. As a grandchild of veterans I was raised to respect the United States and its history. I stand when the banner is played, I do know the words, I do know who wrote it.(I would be shocked if this individual could say the same about "Lift Every Voice.") We must not ignore the fact that, although both of my Grandfathers fought for this country(one of which died with some of the war's chemical poison) and its National Anthem, they were considered second class citizens and insulted with Jim Crow laws and segregated facilities. (by the way,both of my grandfathers escaped to Chicago to avoid hangings!). To say there is no Black Nation in this country is surely a comment made without much thought. A Black Nation was created, not out of rejection of America and the National Anthem. This very real Black Nation was created out of America's rejection and exploitation of Black people as well as other people of color.(reminds me of how unions were formed.). Black History should be addressed everyday and if it isn't, the teachers are to blame, because there isn't one area that we teach in which African-Americans have not made significant contributions. Surely an American Heritage program would be more inclusive of all students, and of course it would include everything you witnessed at the Black History assemblies. Has this teacher ever initiated such a gala event. If it were to be talked about it should be done out of respect for everyone's culture, and not the racist resentment of my culture.

17c.

I do believe Mr. Paulsgrove has created an atmosphere where all students can share their culture with other students. I put the question to you: Who will initiate these programs? Many teachers have spent several years complaining about what students can't do. This is a great opportunity to find out what they can do, what they like to do, and to what leadership styles they respond. Stop Complaining and get up and do something! The sponsors of the White Rhinoceros Club would be willing to help any individual who is willing to put words into action.

17d.

You may not be the only person who thought the story teller's story was sending an inappropriate message, and I'm sure you know that by now. My guess is that you would not have put your comments in this publication if you felt you had no support. Once again we must deal with the issue of ignorance. I'm sure this individual is very well versed in Black Folklore, and was well aware of all the symbolism present in the story(I regret that Mr. Clyburn's time was cut short, it didn't give him an opportunity to explain that to the grown-ups.). The message you picked up may have been "if you have a gun you have the power, " but certainly it was not the message sent. As an educated individual I would have guessed you would have picked up the Afro-Centric presentation of the story (wrong again). I also would have guessed that you would know more about Black Folklore (judging by the comment I wrong again, Does anyone include it in the curriculum?) This was about the arrogance of an individual. This was also, and most importantly, a story about how slaves kept other slaves in check when they wanted to rise up against slave owners. Continue to read and grow, not only Eurocentric material. Expand your horizons!!!

I have read over these concerns and I am offended by the arrogance of some individuals on the Flinn Middle School Staff. Some of these comments suggest that African-Americans seek the acceptance of our European American Community. Once again those of European extraction would like to repress AfroCentric expression when it makes them feel uncomfortable, instead of researching different aspects of African and African-American culture. These comments stand to polarize this building, unless some genuine no-holds barred dialogue is conducted.

All these students wanted to do was work hard on a project, together, and show students and faculty they are capable of more than anyone could ever conceive. I wish teachers and staff would have put aside their personal problems. If they had done that, they would not have missed a beautiful program.